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MONTH

JULY 1952

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The Month is edited from 114 Mount Street, W.1, GROsvenor 2995, and published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 6 & 7 Clifford Street, London, W.1. Subscriptions may be addressed to any bookseller, or, in Great Britain, direct to the publishers; in U.S.A. to British Publications, Inc., 30 East 60th Street, New York 22, N.Y.; in France to W. H. Smith & Son, 248 Rue de Rivoli, Paris 1. The annual subscription is 30s., U.S.A. \$5.



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# ST. AUGUSTINE

By

ROBERT SPEAIGHT

I HAVE SOMETIMES, to induce sleep or distract myself from worry, played a childish game. I have imagined that Charon has ferried me across the Styx and that there, on the other side, an emissary—of whom I am not quite sure—is waiting to receive me. He tells me that before proceeding to other and sterner business I may choose any single person from among the dead, as distinct from the damned, with whom to dine and spend the evening. Even when you have made the capital decision as to whether your companion shall be a man or a woman, the choice is still exasperating in its range. You may reject Dr. Johnson because he would talk too much, and St. Thomas Aquinas because he would talk too little; you may reject all the greatest beauties because they would so evidently be the greatest bores; but you still have to choose between Keats and Coleridge, Madame de Sévigné and Mozart. I must confess that in this particular game the Saints do not offer much competition. One humbly hopes to have a glimpse of them later on. The very fact that they are so tremendous makes them somehow less companionable. What could one conceivably say to St. John of the Cross? In the still earthy and sullied condition in which one disembarks from Charon's ferry, one has the unworthy suspicion that a Saint might spoil one's dinner.

There are, however, certain exceptions to this reluctance to face the best and wisest of mankind. One would give a great deal for an evening in the company of St. Thomas More—the questions and the answers and the slightly whimsy jokes. But of all the men who have ever lived I think that I would choose St. Augustine for the companion of a privileged evening. And since I cannot hope to add anything of the least importance to what has already been written about this prodigious man, I am simply going to ask myself why I should make this choice.

What follows here is neither criticism, nor informed comment; it is no more than the expression of a profound attachment.

You notice that although I do not hesitate to call St. Augustine a prodigy, I refer to him as a man, not as a soul or as a mind. Some of the saints are so transparent that you hardly feel their bodily essences at all. The sorrowing eyes of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, as we see them in the untouched-up photographs, the stigmata of St. Francis, the mittened hands of Padre Pio—these have nothing in common with the life of the body, as we know it to our pleasure or our cost. Again, the massive countenance of Aquinas points to the *quinque viae* or the rout of the Albigensians. These appearances, to be frank, are an incitement to prayer and study; they are not an encouragement to conversation. But with St. Augustine it is different. Here the appearance is anybody's guess—and what a fascinating guess—but the physical man is with us, stirring us with his energy and singeing us with his flame. We see him in sandals and tunic, in cope and mitre, walking and talking in his habit as he lived. In one sense he is remote, radiant with wisdom and elevated by the exercise of heroic virtue; but in another sense he is there beside us speaking our language, knowing our difficulties, and acquainted with our crisis. It may sound presumptuous to say that one would like to have a conversation with St. Augustine; but how dearly one would love to hear him talk!

It is a truism to say that St. Augustine's time was in many respects analogous to our own. There were the same political earthquakes and morbid tyrannies, the same puerile superstitions, the same philosophic unrest. And it is the primary important and saving fact about Augustine that he was born with a question-mark in his mind. By that I mean not only that he went on asking the supreme question until he had found the answer to it, but that when he had found the answer, he went on trying to explain, and not merely to preach, his satisfaction. This set him apart from the dull mass of the indifferent—he would have understood no better than Pascal how anyone could fail to agonize over the answer to the question which haunted him; and it set him apart also from the complacent, from those who sat pretty in their possession of the Faith. There runs through all his writing a certain incredulous gratitude for the gift of grace. He is for ever interrupting his narrative to make room for some exclamation

of contrition or praise. If he were a less gifted writer, this would be irritating; we often find it so in other works of spirituality. But Augustine was by far the greatest writer who has ever written in defence of Christianity. His style has the majesty of great music and the liveliness of good conversation. Father Martindale has compared it to César Franck, and Charles Du Bos used to say that it reminded him of Bach. It has the *sérieux* of the one and the structure, at once so durable and light, of the other.

For all the pleasure one would take in hearing Augustine talk, I fancy that at times I should prefer to play the part of a hidden witness; I should find it fascinating to overhear him discussing Plato with Father D'Arcy, or even psychology with Dr. Eric Strauss. I would gladly give my place at the table to Mr. Graham Greene. But this is to play a different sort of game, and I only introduce these personalities to emphasize the several levels on which Augustine meets us. Unlike so many theologians and moralists, he meets us on the plane of the imagination. It is one thing to admit and to analyse the imagination; anyone with a little training in philosophy can do that. But only genius can exercise the imagination; just as sanctity alone can purify it. Many of the saints—humble, heroic, untutored people—have had what one may call the genius of sanctity. Those who knew the Carmelite Prioress, Mother Mary of the Cross, who died recently at Hitchin, will know something about the common sense of sanctity; and in the spiritual life it may be that genius and common sense are one. But Augustine had genius *and* sanctity; and this makes his use of the imagination so subtle and powerful an instrument for the discovery of truth.

To those who fear and condemn the imagination, who place it below the logical deductions of the schools, we are entitled to reply that it was by this method that Christ Himself had taught. For the imagination can reach those who are incapable of argument; those who, without being poets or children, have the mind of a poet or a child. It is true, of course, that the imagination often turns inward; it nourishes a sterile subjectivism. And it is perhaps because Augustine was himself so great a master of introspection that he appeals to an introspective century. His introspection fascinates us as much as at one time it fascinated him. But it was his mission to experience and to demonstrate the only possible issue of introspection. Many years ago W. B. Yeats



remarked to me, "Man has for so long regarded himself in the mirror that he must now, from sheer boredom, either retreat into the anonymity of the herd, or go forward with wisdom." This observation is pertinent to Augustine. As Maritain has put it, "Mystical wisdom may be called in some sort the activating agent, the catalysing instrument of augustinian introspection, thanks to which it appears as the most marvellous instrument of spiritual observation." Even so loyal a scholastic as M. Maritain can admit that the mode of St. Augustine's teachings was nearer to the method of the Gospels than it was to the scientism of the Schools. In so far as it contained a philosophic doctrine, this was a metaphysic of conversion, a metaphysic of the inward life.

It would be fanciful, perhaps, to describe St. Augustine as a Christian Proust—he had greatnesses to which even a Christian Proust would never have attained—but it may be useful to invoke the name of Proust in order to measure the intelligibility of Augustine to the modern world, and to perceive the contrast between our disease and the cure that he proposes for it. I yield to no one in my admiration for Proust. He remains for me the most readable, the most seductive of writers. He had a genius, not only for expression but for organization, of a very rare kind. But I do not see how one can deny that spiritually, as well as physically, he was an invalid. He was a man who did not, I think, really want to get well. His mind moved round and round in concentric circles, "mixing memory and desire." There was an alarming disparity between his gifts which were enormous and his moral sensibility which was impotent. He was a man who never felt for a moment that the world was too much with him. He did not find an issue to his introspection, because he never seriously looked for one.

Here he is very different from Henry James, with whom he has sometimes been compared. James, for all his introspection, his maddening minutiae of analysis, was, morally, a bracing writer. And the contrast with St. Augustine is naturally overwhelming. Augustine ran all the risks of introspection. He was, at first, more interested in himself than in other people; more interested in ideas than in men; more interested in truth than in charity. He was devoted to his mother, his mistress, and his son. He was very fond of his friends. He had an affectionate nature. But his mind was tuned vertically to his own misery and uncertainty, and



to God. It did not embrace the variety and even the vulgarity of mankind, as the mind of Shakespeare or St. Francis embraced them. Whatever the dissipation or curiosity he may have been entertaining at the moment, he always lived in the presence of his problem. He had, in almost every respect, the character of a modern intellectual, who is trying to see things straight. He had the same ardours and reluctances, and the same embarrassing choice. Who shall it be—Ouspensky, Marx or Freud; Sartre or Rudolf Steiner; Santayana or Tagore? So, in Augustine's day, they crowded round him; the solemn physicians and the self-confident osteopaths of the soul.

For a time he seems to have believed that his greatest temptation was lust, and everything he says on this subject has a moving intensity. Only Shakespeare, with his "expense of spirit in a waste of shame," has expressed the same agony of desire and dissatisfaction. But many others, on the verge of conversion or contrition, have felt as he did the impossibility, the inhumanity, of giving up this person or this thing. Others, also, believing chastity to be possible and beneficial, have asked for it eventually, when the blood is cold; "but not yet." Augustine felt all this, and has described it to us; the sheer wall that the will must climb, forbidding in the terrible sun; the daunting difficulty of the last step. His fears are echoed in the stories of many contemporary conversions. Claudel's four years of waiting after the revelation in Notre Dame; the slow crisis in the convictions of Charles Du Bos, whom Augustine literally led by the hand; the painful stages, suggested in his *Journal*, of Julian Green's return. Augustine summed up the feelings of all who exclaim, "I believe—yes; but I simply have not the strength to behave."

There is in this final agony of the will, enfeebled by sexual habit, a hint of what we are told about the agony of death; the sense of loneliness, of a supreme effort to be made and no one near. In the eighth book of the *Confessions* Augustine expresses the truth, which heresy has sometimes deformed, of the helplessness of the soul until Grace has come to its rescue. No mountaineer describing his ascent of the Matterhorn has given us a greater sensation of vertigo than did Augustine in this passage. He is in the garden, sobbing on the bench, with Alypius close by; one feels the noonday heat and the normalities of social intercourse; a decanter of wine, perhaps, nearly empty on the

table, with the Epistles of St. Paul beside it; a bird singing; and each detail of the story Ponticianus has just told hanging like motes in the air:

For I kept saying within myself "Let it be now, let it be now," and by the mere words I had begun to move towards the resolution. I almost made it, yet I did not quite make it. But I did not fall back into my original state, but as it were stood near to get my breath. And I tried again and I was almost there, and now I could all but touch it and hold it: yet I was not quite there, I did not touch it or hold it. I still shrank from dying unto death and living unto life. The lower condition which had grown habitual was more powerful than the better condition which I had not tried. The nearer the point of time came in which I was to become different, the more it struck me with horror; but it did not force me utterly back nor turn me utterly away, but held me there between the two. (Trans. F. J. Sheed.)

The unflinching realism of this speaks volumes to the modern mind; we are miles away from rhapsody. Augustine is here the perfect example of his own dictum, "*etiam peccata serviunt.*" They do indeed, and I have no doubt that the main reason why I should like to spend an evening with him is because he was a sinner; and because his sins were so clearly not the peccadillos with which the Saints seem so often unnecessarily to torment themselves.

Augustine, I have said, believed that his principal sin was lust. It was natural that he should have believed this, though there is no reason to think that his experiences were abnormal for a young man of his temperament and his time. It was natural because lust, unlike other sins, is always with us, only masking itself (as it did not, I think, mask itself for Augustine) under the cover of romanticism. Nevertheless, I am sure that Augustine's most insidious temptation was pride, and it had already been overcome when he stole away in the garden to weep. His crucifying consciousness of difficulty is proof of this. Pride, swaggering as courage, would have gone undaunted to the last assault—and fallen; or, if momentarily successful, would not have persevered. All the aquiline strength of Augustine came from his humility, just as his humility came from the knowledge of his own weakness. Here also sin had served.

There had been perhaps a tincture of pride in his curiosity. A

man may sincerely desire the truth; yet he may want it on his own terms. He is not prepared for unconditional surrender. If he is a natural philosopher and polemicist, he will enjoy the cut and thrust of discussion; and even when he has reached a provisional conclusion, he will like to feel that in the last resort he is *disponible*. Or even if his reason has surrendered to logic, he will rejoice that his will is uncommitted. These are subtle temptations and they stalk the salons and studios of twentieth-century London or Paris, as they stalked the *atria* of Carthage or Milan. Augustine, it is true, had never been blind to the vanity and snobbery, the petty jealousies, of the Schools. If one of his professors "had the worst of the argument with some fellow-master, he was more torn with angry vanity than I when I was beaten in a game of ball." It was more contemptible to talk with a vulgar accent than to hate one's fellow-men. These are recognizable traits in Oxford and Cambridge, as they are in Chelsea and Bloomsbury. The intellectual is almost by definition the most unforgiving of men.

The brilliant group to which Augustine belonged was also remarkable for its ignorance. Extraordinary things were happening in the world around them, of which they knew nothing. He learned of the great ascetic experience in the desert, of the vocation and the vigil of St. Antony, with the same astonishment (but with rather less incredulity) than an aesthete from King's might hear of Padre Pio, or a sceptic from the London School of Economics might listen to an eye-witness account of Lourdes. But where the pride of intellect menaced him most dangerously was in his dealings with Divinity itself. For a long time Augustine's God was essentially the God of the philosophers, and it is a curious thing that even with the example of Monica at his side and with the fact of a palpable organized Christianity around him, he could have gone so far without bringing himself face to face with Christ. He had sought to gain by intellectual effort alone the wisdom that must be bought by dispossession.

For I was not yet lowly enough to hold the lowly Jesus as my God, nor did I know what lesson His embracing of our weakness was to teach . . . I talked away as if I knew a great deal; but if I had not sought the way to you in Christ Our Saviour, I would have come not to instruction but to destruction.

Just as there are certain Christians who are tempted to by-pass

the Cross, to circumvent the necessity of suffering by an emphasis on more comfortable doctrines, so there have always been enquirers who think themselves too clever for Jesus Christ. The shattering second-rateness of their prescriptions is plain to read in the history of thought; they have not even the dignity of heresy; for they do not persist like the greater heresies, but fail for want of satisfying the human nature which they flatter. A false spirituality is the disease of carnal minds. Augustine had "thought of Our Saviour Himself . . . as brought forth for our salvation from the mass of Your most luminous substance: and I could believe nothing of Him unless I could picture it in my own vain imagination. I argued that such a nature could not possibly be born of the virgin Mary, unless it were mingled with her flesh. And I could not see how that which I had thus figured to myself could be mingled and not defiled." Here there was perhaps a legacy of Platonic idealism—I have often detected a mountainous pride in people who call themselves Platonists; and in this sense the conversion of St. Augustine may be described as the consummation, the realization rather, of Plato's thought. So fine a structure, if men were safely to take refuge in it, needed the Cross and the Crib. It needed the charity of the one and the condescension of the other, although condescension and charity were in both.

One of the most striking passages in the *Confessions* is the story of Victorinus and Simplicianus, the master of St. Ambrose. Victorinus, a friend of Augustine, had become a kind of crypto-convert, not wanting the matter talked about and wishing, as so many people wish, to be a Christian in his own way. "I would have you know," he had said to Simplicianus, "that I am now a Christian." Simplicianus' reply was the voice of the Catholic Church, which has never shown the slightest disposition to indulge peculiar sensibilities. "I shall not believe it," he said, "nor count you among Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ." Victorinus, we are told, retorted with some irony, "Then is it the walls that make Christians?" Each man persisted stubbornly in his position, for Victorinus was afraid to excite the ridicule of his important friends; and it was not until later that he suddenly remarked to Simplicianus, "Let us go to the Church. I wish to be made a Christian." He was subsequently instructed and baptized.

This story illustrates the cardinal vice of the intellectual, which is really the sin of the Pharisee; that he regards himself as a superior person. Hence the temptation of the *petite chapelle*. He does not realize that segregation stultifies his thought. Above all, of course, he fears the institution; Victorinus' retort about the "walls" has echoed all down the ages of individualism. "The Church," such a man will argue, "is all right for simple people who need guidance. It certainly had a good effect on Mrs. So-and-So. It is admirable as a custodian of morals and a cement of civilization. But for anybody like myself——" This reasoning is not always formulated, but it is often felt; and it was enormously to the credit of Augustine that he never seems to have entertained it for an instant. Being a Christian meant for him one thing only; it meant asking instruction, making confession, and receiving baptism like anybody else; it meant the use of the Sacraments and the pursuit of the good life; it meant membership of the Catholic Church. His superior intelligence was quite incapable of flirting with any such folly as a fancy religion of one's own.

And so it was that this great individualist found community by entering within the walls; and the wisdom he instils comes to us in large measure from the contacts he made there. He learned, from the exercise of the episcopate, to reach men at all levels, no longer "redolent of the high cedars of the schools," but offering the "health-giving herbs" of Christian doctrine. Others have done this, to be sure, but no one was ever to occupy a position of high administrative authority and expound so ripe a wisdom with so sharp a psychological insight. Like Christ Himself, he knew what was in man; not with the knowledge of the Creator allied to the experience of the Creature, but with the purified knowledge of his own mistakes. Charles Du Bos recounts that as he was approaching the crisis of his conversion, a young priest of Saint-Pierre de Montrouge remarked to him; "For the Christian discouragement is perhaps the only unforgivable fault. Remember that there was nothing that St. Augustine had not done, but that on the anniversary of his death we celebrate Mass with the white vestments, which are the symbol of purity." A nature so violent as Augustine's might easily have been twisted to fanaticism, and even today the temperaments which are inclined to stress the corruptibility of human nature are sometimes



described as Augustinian. But it is not this aspect of his teaching that I wish to emphasize here; it is no lantern-jawed Jansenist whose image is reflected in the periods of Augustine's prose. It is a man possessed through and through by the sense of glory. It is the radiance rather than the exactitude of truth—though indeed the two are inseparable—that shines through all his commentary. We can easily discern how grace had softened as well as straightened his nature. The man who had known the ferocity of sexual passion could see in the meeting of Christ and the woman taken in adultery nothing more than "infinite misery face to face with infinite compassion." The intellectual who had jibbed at the Incarnation could now paint its paradox. "He lies in the manger, but contains the world; He sucks at the breast, but feeds the Angels; He is wrapped in swaddling clothes, but vests us with immortality; He is suckled, but adored; He found no place at the inn, but makes for Himself a temple in the hearts of believers. For in order that weakness might become strong, strength became weak."

Here we have precision of doctrine linked to an experienced spirituality and a luminous power of phrase. We catch the authentic accent of sanctity. But where Augustine is exceptional among the Saints—where we think of him in company with St. Paul—is in the possibilities of error that were overcome in him. He was a great writer, and this he would always have been; but we might have turned against him his own reproach to Licentius, "You have received from God a mind of gold and you have placed it at the service of pleasure; you have made of it a vase in which you offer yourself to the devil." He might have been a great heresiarch, and he maintained that the great heresies were all the products of great minds. He might have refused the community of the "walls." Instead, it was by living inside the walls and looking at them, that he learnt to design the architecture of the City of God. Here he found the sense of proportion which saved him from fanaticism. He learnt that it needs all sorts to make a Church; that "humble wedlock is better than proud virginity"; that while the Church is an institution, she is "an institution of spiritual people" and only God knows who are really His own. "How many that are not ours are yet, as it were, within; how many that are ours are still, as it were, without. . . . And they that are not ours, who are within, when they find

their opportunities go out; and they that are ours, who are without, when they find opportunities, return." He admitted the place of those "who . . . marry, who give in marriage, who till the fields, who build houses," He allowed the reasonable and disinterested rights of property. He saw not only the hierarchy but the wholeness of created things. "I realized that while certain higher things were better than lower things, yet all things together are better than the higher alone."

As always, it is the total man, spiritualized but not rarefied, who speaks to us—with eloquence but without exaggeration. His appeal is strong and his message significant for a generation in stress. He may fairly be described as crisis-minded, not because he suffered from the panic of the present moment, but because, basing himself on the Bible, he created a philosophy—or rather, as Maritain suggests, a wisdom of history. He enables you to feel the past, endure the present, and to some extent foresee the future. Through all the catastrophic changes he had witnessed, he saw the war of the Two Cities; here he corrects, though he does not always contradict, the historicism which can only see the material event. But his sense of crisis was fundamentally the Christian obligation of choice. This was all part of the question-mark he was born with. "What shall I believe? What shall I do? How can I know Him without loving Him first?" These questions, we have seen, might have become the counters of a sophisticated game; a substitute for spiritual vigour. But we know that they were not, for the reason that Augustine, like all the gretest thinkers, was a man in whom intellect knew its place. He is the perfect illustration of Vauvenargues' maxim that "great thoughts spring from the heart."

# LORD RANDOLPH<sup>1</sup>

## *A Personal Memory*

By

SIR SHANE LESLIE

THERE CAN BE very few amongst the living who can remember Lord Randolph Churchill personally. Besides Mr. Churchill and myself I wonder who survives of that Victorian galaxy who attended his funeral service on a bleak day in January 1895? Dean Farrar was then Dean of Westminster Abbey and conducted the service. I was taken as a small school-boy and, as Lord Randolph's only godson, believed myself a very special if not principal mourner on that occasion. Mr. Gladstone was not present but his great rival Lord Salisbury was there, looking very Tudoresque. We were made to stand up in our carriage to salute him. A hundred memories collect of that *enfant terrible* of the gods, Lord Randolph, whose fatherhood Winston was being urged to remember as the greatest pride likely in his life. The son would answer that perhaps his father would be remembered for his son instead! This the years have proved to be a fairly accurate surmise.

When Lord Randolph died in full manhood, apparently a physical and political wreck, the banner of the Tory Democracy he had raised between the two invulnerable Victorian parties seemed dust-trampled for ever. His son set out to restore his father's prestige by the pen and to make his ideals worthy of record in case they might ever be called for again. He succeeded in erecting the greatest filial monument that survives in the language.

Out of the general pity for the human and contempt for the political side he wrote one of the most prepossessing biographies of the period. It is read as a moving story and a living message when the multi-volumed Lives of Gladstone and Salisbury are placed on the shelf for reference only. No one would describe them as works of literary art like Lord Randolph's.

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Randolph Churchill*, by Winston S. Churchill (Odhams, 21s.)



Winston Churchill's *Life of his father* has held its own as a standard work in more than one sense. It has also fluttered as the standard of the Primrose League and as a message of hope to all who believe that English politics can be built anew, not from Germany or Russia, but by an alliance of native Democratic and Tory elements. This was always alluded to as "the Legacy of Disraeli."

The book which was dedicated to the late and Catholic Duke of Marlborough was issued from Blenheim in 1905. Lord Randolph had been dead for ten years and his memory would have been slowly buried in such fine dust as a meteor creates during its temporary passage in the altitudes—had not this brilliant essay appeared, so moving and sincere, so lacking in hypocrisies and platitudes that the arrows from Lytton Strachey's venomous quiver, if they were ever aimed, were halted in mid-air.

The book as biography could not be rewritten or corrected, but additions could be made, and this is what Mr. Churchill has done after forty-seven years. In two brief pages he introduces the new edition, sadly inferior in paper and illustrations compared to the old in its early form. It is a pity that a larger collection of cartoons and caricatures could not have been added, for after Dizzy and Gladstone no Victorian statesman appealed more to the joyous malignity of the caricaturist. To the modern reader, whose taste and sense of history is largely formed by the *Comic Cut*, by daily instead of weekly satires in portraiture and by cinema, only an extensive wad of caricatures would convey what an exciting and uproarious incident Lord Randolph managed to make himself in English politics.

The vast mass of material so industriously edited by Mr. Churchill from the great folio cases preserved in Blenheim Palace is dead matter to the present generation. Even the vivid account published for the first time of Sir Henry Wolff's desperate efforts to renew peace between Salisbury and his daring lieutenant in 1886 would fall fairly flat on readers unless their memories went back to the prolonged and controversial conjectures as to the real motives for Lord Randolph's famous resignation, when at thirty-six he stood at the top of the tree, Chancellor and Leader of the House—never to rise again!

In all those long-buried intrigues only one personality appears worthy of a dart tinged with Strachean sarcasm. It is

the portentous Lord Rowton, Disraeli's "butler," who made himself ridiculous by affecting to be one of those important mediators behind the scenes, who is consulted by neither side but acquires for himself a great deal of unnecessary notice. Lord Rowton affected to be consulted by the Queen and allowed the papers to chronicle his movements as though he held the wires. He then disappeared from history.

The appendices, being composed in an old-fashioned jargon about dead issues, are not worth altogether the few sentences in which Mr. Churchill estimates what his father would have felt had he lived till today. He would have opposed the Boer War and mourned the loss of India. He would have rejoiced in the South African settlement and been content with Ireland as she stands today, especially with the "Society, independent, Christian, cultured, law-respecting" of the South. Lord Randolph himself was capable of sudden spasms of admiring friendliness with Ireland. He showed great admiration for the Irish Christian Brothers during his residence, and when called upon by various Protestant Societies to satisfy their ghastly fears on such occasions as the appointment of a Catholic Home Secretary, he rebuked them in language which was as tolerant as it was unanswerable.

Lord Randolph's public attitude to the Catholic Church could not be better shown than in a manuscript letter which lies before me. At the height of his fame the Scottish Protestant Alliance had served him with a Resolution in their most bigoted fashion. Mr. Churchill prints one part of the correspondence. The Alliance protested against the elevation of Mr. Henry Matthews (Lord Llandaff later) to the Home Office. To this Lord Randolph replied tartly regretting with astonishment that "in this age of enlightenment and general toleration, persons professing to be educated and intelligent can arrive at conclusions so senseless and irrational."

The sons of John Knox replied vigorously (September 14, 1886) under the signature of the Revd. James Therr. Lord Randolph (like Judges in the Court of Appeal) merely added more to the sentence in a letter which, since the Alliance preferred to sell rather than publish, we, the eventual purchasers, do hereby print, whatever copyright may have elapsed since September 15, 1886:

I greatly regret that I have not the time to follow the Directors on to the field of acute polemical theology to which they so courteously invite me. If circumstances were more favorable I should be much attracted by their challenge; but they will naturally understand that, on public grounds, I am compelled to confine myself to a re-assertion of the opinion which I expressed in my former letter to you, and which I will allow myself to supplement by the suggestion that the views of the Directors, if practically pushed to a logical conclusion, would involve the repeal of all those Acts of Parliament which have removed the political disabilities formerly impressed on Roman Catholics, and the re-enactment of all those penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, which the vast majority of the British people are anxious to forget.

I have the honour to be your obedient servant,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL

It is interesting to contemplate this striking letter, superb in Johnsonian English but unanswerable in logic, and wonder whether the mantle of "Young England" really descends upon the Tory Democracy of today, and whether the present Government can rise to defy equally the Communist and the Protestant feelings in the House and not allow what is a financial Penal Law to be enacted and carried out in the Educational strictures which are due to overwhelm, perhaps annihilate, the Catholic Schools which are the most important of the fruits of Emancipation?

His son now claims that it was the Churchillian idea of "Tory Democracy" which has enabled the Conservative Party to remain strong and vital. In fact he "could take his place in the House of Commons today with less sense of disharmony than any of his contemporaries." This was perfectly possible of one who claimed that he had never feared the English democracy who delighted in his version of the blessed *écrasement des bourgeois* which was to rise from the union of the peculiar sporting and moral senses of the other two classes—England's aristocracy and England's working men!

That Conservatism now faces Collectivism "may well be regarded as Lord Randolph's contribution to the life of our times." Any similar contribution from his great rivals Salisbury or Gladstone would be difficult to signal to the historians.

Living or dead, Mr. Churchill had done the best for a father who was not too good a paternal exemplar of affection.

The immense stores of material lying at Blenheim have not been milked to any extent to make the book more interesting. For instance, omissions made in letters printed in 1905 could surely have been filled up today: and above all the amusing letters of Labouchere to Lord Randolph, which still await printing, might well have been disinterred. It is unlucky that such clever and critical letters passing between a radical free-lance and a Tory leader should have missed appearance in Labouchere's as well as Lord Randolph's Life. But unfortunately the most exhilarating and libellous correspondences are always omitted in biography, and wads of preposterously dull epistles and memorandums substituted. That Lord Randolph's Parliamentary career can be read at all in these days still depends largely on the deftness and genius with which the papers have been distilled, facts portrayed and a rather refractory character summoned from the dead in as vital and exciting shape as the Witch of Endor succeeded in putting upon a great political prophet deceased in her days.

If Victorian biographies are to be resuscitated at portentous length in these days of diminishing paper, editors may well turn their attention to what has previously been censored and left out as well as dock the vast amount which would not be missed inasmuch as it was scarcely ever read. It will be Mr. Churchill's mercurial wand alone which will direct the eyes of the modern generation on a great and attractive Parliamentarian, who by one flashing resignation succeeded in blasting his own career but has posthumously supplied Mr. Churchill with sufficient wreckage to build the Conservative Ark now moving slowly but hopefully upon waters more broken and under-wrought than any that Lord Randolph could have ever dreamed possible.

There is no reason why so vivid and valiant a figure should not be preserved to posterity. His social life was as electrical as his progress in politics. It could hardly be credited in his own day that twice Lord Randolph was nearly involved in fighting a duel, so much nearer to the days of chivalry was life lived in the Eighties of the last century.

An account of these threatened conflicts would add much to the excitement of what is necessarily a dusty record, especially as they are so much to the credit and charm of the principal.

It is a historical part of Lord Randolph's Life that he was not averse to facing the prospect of a duel and some documents

survive to attest the warmth of his political spirit in one case and of his chivalry in another.

In the first he was deeply offended by some words used of him by Lord Hartington, brother of Lord Frederick Cavendish, killed in the Phoenix Park. We found a letter from his seconder in challenging the utterer of the unpleasant phrases in the Blenheim papers which the late Duke showed to us. Who was this Mercury, messenger between the young statesmen, but an old Oscott boy, William Henry O'Shea, whose wife later married Mr. Parnell and revised the trend of Irish History. O'Shea was considered the arbiter of points of honour in a House of Commons, admittedly then unreformed by the franchise and more aristocratic than today.

In the old days duels were fought amongst the greatest. The Duke of Wellington himself and Lord Winchelsea exchanged shots on Catholic Emancipation. Castlereagh fought Canning. Though duelling became illegal, challenges continued to be made on the two points which appeared sufficiently important to Englishmen—politics and the honour of ladies. In rare cases the duels were fought abroad, as indeed they still are. It is not necessary to discuss the Canon Law of the Church, when a duel is permissible or at least absolvable in the light of events. A good deal depends on the *intent* to kill or merely to satisfy human honour. It has never been decided whether the Count D'Orsay was justified in challenging a blasphemer of the honour of Our Blessed Lady.

Well, Lord Randolph Churchill used the old procedure of despatching Mr. O'Shea to Lord Hartington. The surviving papers are at Chatsworth and photostats were kindly given us by the Librarian with permission from the late Duke of Devonshire. They read:

W. H. O'Shea, M.P., to Lord Hartington, M.P. (May 25, 1881)

I have the honour to request an interview for the purpose of making a communication of importance. It concerns your Lordship personally and you will consider me justified in asking you to fix as early an hour as may be convenient.

I have the honour to be your Lordship's obedient servant.

Lord Hartington, M.P., to W. H. O'Shea, M.P. (May 26, 1881)

I have received your letter of this date enclosing a copy of one



which you have sent to Lord Randolph Churchill [this is in Blenheim archives]. I have no exception to take to the statement contained in your letter, although it does not of course purport to give a full account of what was said. I have only to add that I learn from your letter for the first time that you were entrusted with a letter to me from Lord Randolph Churchill which you were charged under certain circumstances to hand to me.

I remain yrs sincerely.

W. H. O'Shea, M.P., to Lord Hartington, M.P. (May 26, 1881)

Mr. O'Shea presents his compliments to Lord Hartington and begs to enclose a copy of the letter which the former has sent to Lord Randolph Churchill, giving the result of Mr. O'Shea's interview with Lord Hartington this morning. It only remains for Mr. O'Shea to express his thanks for Lord Hartington's courtesy to himself.

W. H. O'Shea, M.P., to Lord Randolph Churchill, M.P.

Dear Churchill, in accordance with your request I called at Devonshire House yesterday morning and left a note asking Lord Hartington for an interview. This morning I received his answer appointing  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 11 o'clock for it.

Having explained to him that a belief had been expressed that the epithets "vile," "calumnious," and "lying" used by him in his reply to you on Monday in speaking of "Vanity Fair" newspaper, were correctly intended to apply to yourself, he assured me that he had no such intention.

Lord Hartington further mentioned that since the above-mentioned incident in the House, he had become aware that statements somewhat similar to the one in "Vanity Fair" had been generally diffused.

Having received so frank an explanation, I expressed myself on your behalf perfectly satisfied, and there was therefore no occasion to hand Lord Hartington the letter with which you had entrusted me.

I remain yours very sincerely.<sup>1</sup>

The actual challenge was then withdrawn and presumably destroyed. A year later Hartington's brother had been assassinated as Irish Chief Secretary and Mr. O'Shea had become the messenger of the Kilmainham Treaty between Parnell in prison and the British Government and later between Mr. Parnell and Cardinal Manning.

<sup>1</sup> Chatsworth Papers.

The second duel which concerned Lord Randolph occurred or was threatened over the honour of a Countess in the Peerage who was equally admired by Lord Blandford (Lord Randolph's elder brother) and the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). Lord Randolph's part was purely fraternal and very honourable, for he had never known or approached the lady himself, but he rebuked the Prince in a manner that could be considered injurious as well as insulting. As a result Lord Knollys arrived at 2 Connaught Place with a letter from the Prince challenging him to a duel. Lord Randolph's answer was superb. It was that of a Christian and chivalrous gentleman. He sent Lord Falmouth (the winner of Derbies) to say that he was prepared to meet anyone deputed by the Prince, and fight him anywhere on the Continent, but that nothing would induce him to lift his hand against his future Sovereign.<sup>1</sup> I record it to his honour as his godson. I doubt if he ever made a nobler or more chivalrous decision. But there was still something of the old valour and ancient chivalry left in politics until the close of the nineteenth century. It is true Lord Randolph was bitterly assailed and insulted by the Party he had lifted out of the mud. They never forgave him his own bitter criticisms of the "old gang" or the sudden resignation which threw them into precipitate confusion in 1886.

Terrible years followed as his brain slowly retreated into the recesses of disorder: when world-travel, African exploration, big wild-game hunting, the adoration and nursing powers of wife and mother all failed to restore him.

It was in those years that I recall him—a silent, bearded, moody figure that moved through the house in Connaught Place or stood without a word or sign in the country house, Banstead Manor, which our families sometimes shared near Newmarket (he had taken to horse-racing as another distraction). Memory of those days is singularly good. I can recall him emerging suddenly from his study in Connaught Place and being presented by my mother to his godson and his quickly fumbling through his pockets to find the requisite gold piece which he presented to me. Later in the country I presented him with an old bird's nest which he declined with inscrutable silence. I never attempted speech to him again. The brain had begun to decline and indeed Winston's book gives enough hints and

<sup>1</sup> Family archives in possession of the writer.

symptoms for a student of medicine to prepare a clinical case. Only the Greek tragedians could produce the line worthy to be cut on his tomb. From Sophocles, the great chariot race and accident scene in the *Electra*. The words leap out—

οἱ ἔργα δράσας, οἷα λαγχάνει κάκα!

Well may we hope that the ideals of Tory Democracy based on the "Young England" which was the political counterpart of the "Oxford Movement" may inspire the new regime. Our troubles and problems in Church and Education would be smoothed if not solved by an application of Lord Randolph's generous views toward the Catholic Church, while at the same time he supported the Anglican Establishment, the undivorced family, and the Christian banner as the strengths of British life. He resisted Bradlaugh with all his strength in the House. Atheism and Malthusianism he attacked in the Member for Northampton as though he were himself a Champion of the Church, almost a Son of the Faith. He won the instant interest and appreciation of Cardinal Manning thereby.

While he went far in his trust in the people and in making English workers comfortable in their homes and trades, his views on Tory Democracy were not other than those of Christian Democracy. For him the English Bible was as great a *literary* treasure as, it must be admitted, he thought Gibbon and Surtees' Jorrocks. But those were days when Scriptural allusions could be understood in the House of Commons and even cries of "Judas" and "Herod" could provoke a riot. We must accept as a sad symptom of public life today that Christianity is no advantage and Catholicism a decided obstacle to Parliamentary life.

There are many reasons for re-reading what is undoubtedly one of the five best biographies in English. The author performed his part with admirable historical temper and some personal and domestic temperament. It is the publishers who have failed to do justice in the matter of the few and skimpy illustrations and worse still in the mangy and restricted index, from which it could never be believed that the making of a good quick-working and all-inclusive index has become a minor branch of the literary art. There is no excuse for not extending the original index to twenty pages and making the whole serviceable to students, which this is not.



Though much of the politics and intrigues are as dead as a churchyard, there is much for the young Tory Democrats, "the men around Churchill," to glean, if they are to raise the prestige of their Party and even the world-glories of their country.

Lord Randolph once added Burma to the Empire, and might be described as an Imperialist who was also a citizen of the world. He travelled Russia, India, Japan, South Africa and the Americas when their forms and cultures and possibilities seemed as remote from what we know today as they themselves were from the days of the Roman Empire.

It is remarkable how little in that world has withstood the crashes of this century. The House of Commons and most remarkably the Royal House of England.

In spite of the temporary feud between the Churchill family and the Prince, which once clove English Society, all ended happily in the end, and Lord Randolph with his brilliant wife became host and hostess to the Prince abroad and at home; but alas, Lord Randolph never lived to hail him as he had hoped as his Sovereign. A time might have come when Edward VII might have summoned the author of "Tory Democracy" to untangle some of the knots which Asquith and the Liberals could not untie, but it was not to be. Even if the curtains of time could have been miraculously drawn, Lord Randolph on his deathbed in 1895 could hardly have visioned the Prince's great-granddaughter arriving as Queen of England from Africa to be received by Lord Randolph's son as her first Prime Minister! *Adsint omina optima!*

# JACOBEOAN PLAYHOUSES AND CATHOLIC CLERICS

By

I. J. SEMPER

**D**URING THE YEARS 1617 and 1618 the secular priests of London were divided into two factions over the question whether it was lawful for them to attend the Jacobean playhouses. This controversy constitutes a strange and forgotten episode in English ecclesiastical history. Today, it survives in a manuscript (4787), which is preserved in the Folger Shakespeare Library of Washington, D.C. This manuscript comprises three documents: the prohibition, dated March 9, 1617/18, and signed by William Harrison, Archpriest of England, wherein the secular priests under his jurisdiction are forbidden to attend plays acted by common players upon common stages, under penalty of losing the use of their sacerdotal faculties; the letter of protest against the prohibition, dated April 25, 1618, and signed by Thomas Leke, a secular priest of London; and the rejoinder to this protest, undated and unsigned, but evidently the work of John Colleton, assistant to the archpriest, who published the prohibition.

These documents present a detailed story of the controversy. The story begins as far back as the accession of James I in 1603; for certain priests, despite the repeated warnings issued not only by Dr. William Harrison but also by his two predecessors, George Blackwell, who was appointed archpriest in 1599, and George Birkhead, who succeeded him in 1608, had continued to frequent the theatres. The chief offenders are listed as Mr. Thomas Leke, Mr. Thules and Mr. Canon. As a last resort Dr. Harrison issued the prohibition.

The prohibition comprises three folios in the manuscript. The essential part reads: "Forasmuch as there haue been seuerall complaincts made, & aduertisement giuen, that not a few are scandalised, and more disedified by the goeing of certain Preists

to playes, acted by common plaiers upon common stages . . . I do by these absolutely prohibit them, & euery of them, under pain of loosing ye use of theyre faculties, in the fact itself to bee incurred . . ." (fol. 1<sup>r</sup>). However, the archpriest states that his prohibition does not extend to any priest who, desiring to attend a certain play, goes beforehand to the assistant of his district, presents a sufficient reason, and secures permission in writing.

Some time after March 9, 1617/18 Fr. Colleton, as assistant to the archpriest, called the secular priests of London to attend a meeting at which he read the prohibition. Although a number of these priests, including Fr. Leke, were in prison, they were permitted to go abroad in the city during the day. Both Fr. Leke and Fr. Colleton are in substantial agreement as to what happened at the meeting. The majority of the clerics present maintained a discreet silence. Three priests, Mr. Farmer, Mr. St. George, and a third, who later changed his mind, spoke in favour of the prohibition. Those who stood against it directed some pointed questions to Fr. Colleton regarding the authority of the archpriest "to make decrees, prohibitions, or statutes *sub grauissima poena*" (fol. 6<sup>r</sup>). Fr. Leke injects a personal note into his description of the meeting by affirming that "when Mr. Colleton published the Prohibition . . . by ye trembling of his hand, hee shewed the terrour of his conscience" (fol. 82<sup>r</sup>). It is by using the first person in seeking to refute this charge that Fr. Colleton betrays himself as author of the answer to Fr. Leke's protest. Although he asserts that the prohibition is so justified "as neither the authour, nor the publisher haue cause to blush thereat, and lesse upon horror of conscience to tremble" (fol. 83<sup>r</sup>), it is probable that he showed signs of nervousness when he read the prohibition. He was an elderly priest, who was ordained at Douai in 1576. Moreover, in his rejoinder he reveals himself as a person of high-strung temperament.

Fr. Leke's protest, which was handed to the archpriest either on, or shortly after, April 25, 1618, occupies five folios in the manuscript. He "marvels" at the prohibition chiefly because plays that have nothing in them contrary to faith and morals are held to be indifferent according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan and other learned writers, and also because such plays are allowed in Catholic countries. Distinguishing between scandal taken and scandal given, he denies that he has been guilty of the latter. He writes:

Wee knowe that most of the principal Catholicks about London doe goe to playes, and all for ye most part of my ghostly children do knowe that I sometimes goe, and are not scandalised; and the like I have heard other Preists, & religious abroad, do sometimes goe to playes, beeing in secular habit, which by your pardon maketh us more to wonder, that they beeing not prohibited by the Superiors of the Benedictines, nor the Jesuites, that a prohibition should bee put out against us, as though wee should bee subiected to arbitrarie rules of an harder nature then they (fol. 5<sup>v</sup>).

And he concludes by requesting the archpriest either to revoke the prohibition or to prove that he possesses the authority to make a decree which binds under such a heavy penalty. If this request is ignored, he warns that the prohibition will be regarded as a betrayal of ecclesiastical liberty.

The outcome was that Dr. Harrison withdrew the prohibition. At the end of his rejoinder to Fr. Leke, Fr. Colleton proceeds to satisfy the curiosity of those who might question why the prohibition was revoked, seeing that it could be proved to be both lawful and needful. He states that the archpriest never dreamed that when the prohibition was published "there would bee such an alarm sounded, such a tumult raised, such ruffling, such storming, such siding, such taking parts, such soliciting of others to ioign in an appeal, as there was, to the astonishment of manie" (fol. 86<sup>v</sup>). When, therefore, the archpriest saw "the headinesse of the humour" that prevailed, he concluded that the scandal attendant on this dissension would be greater than that given by priests who visited the theatres; and he acted accordingly.

Fr. Colleton's rejoinder, which runs to eighty-two folios, is the most important document in the manuscript not only because it is a forceful presentation of the case against clerical playgoing, but also because it is a contemporary evaluation of the Jacobean playhouses, plays and actors.<sup>1</sup> Undated and unsigned, it is a copy of the letter sent to Fr. Leke. This copy was evidently filed in the archives of the archpriest along with the prohibition and the protest.

Intended to be a complete and detailed refutation of the arguments advanced by Fr. Leke, the rejoinder leaves no pertinent

<sup>1</sup> This second aspect of the controversy is stressed in my article, "The Jacobean Theatre Through the Eyes of Catholic Clerics," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, January 1952, pp. 45-51.

source of ecclesiastical learning unexplored. The writings of the Fathers of the early Church, the canons of various councils and the pronouncements of St. Thomas Aquinas and other theologians are cited and documented in an all-out effort to demolish the case for clerical playgoing.

First of all, Fr. Colleton clarifies the prohibition by stating that it "only forbiddeth to goe to playes, or play, acted by common players, on common Stages" (fol. 10<sup>r</sup>). It does not forbid attendance at plays presented in the Inns of Court, the royal court, the universities, or private houses, "although the said plaies bee perfourmed by common Stageplayers . . ." (fol. 10<sup>r</sup>). Thus the prohibition banned the public playhouses only. We know from contemporary documents that among influential sections of the London populace the Jacobean playhouses were regarded as the favourite resorts of mundane and licentious persons. Fr. Colleton makes the most of this fact to prove that no cleric could frequent them without giving scandal. In answering Fr. Leke's contention that the scandal is taken unjustly, he writes:

Is it possible that the scandal is taken uniustly, when the very place itself wherein the playes bee acted, is of many counted not much better then a good cheap market of dishonestie? Is it possible that the scandal is taken uniustly, when Preists are known to bee Preists, and who ought to bee examples of grauitie, uirtue, pietie, shall showe themselves in those places where no one of grauitie, no one of calling, and ye fame of aged yeres, no one bearing magistracie, and authoritie dares to bee seen, for fear of loosing his estimation thereby, or of hauing his carriages questioned? (folios 35<sup>v</sup> and 36<sup>r</sup>).

Since his accusation of "dishonestie," or licentiousness, is based on secondhand evidence, Fr. Colleton is careful to introduce the qualifying words, "is of many counted." But this qualification does not invalidate his argument that the playhouses are "altogether inconuenient, and dishonourable for a preist to appear in" (fol. 60<sup>r</sup>). The Jacobean theatres, apart from the actors and the plays, had a bad name, due largely to the denunciations of Puritan moralists and London magistrates; and hence it was not proper for clerics, who should be above suspicion, to be seen in them.

So much for "the very place itself wherein the playes bee



acted." As to the plays, Fr. Colleton scornfully denies Fr. Leke's contention that, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas and other theologians, it is lawful for priests to attend the public theatres when the dramas do not contravene faith and morals. He writes: "In brief, That Preists do offend, and much wrong theyre own reputation by going to such common playes, is an assertion so clear and certain, that lived you Mathusalems yeres, and should spend the whole term in reading, yet I dare say you would not finde one Divine for you, or one approved precedent" (fol. 12<sup>r</sup>). He complains that Fr. Leke did not quote from St. Thomas Aquinas and the other theologians, but later in the rejoinder he himself refers to the classic passage in the *Summa Theologica* (II-II, 168, 3, ad 3), which deals specifically with plays and actors, and which Fr. Leke evidently had in mind. In this passage St. Thomas declares that, since the object of professional actors is "to cheer the heart of man," they perform a social function in affording needed mental relaxation; and, as a consequence, that it is lawful to attend the plays which they present, provided these plays do not contain "unlawful words or deeds."

Fr. Colleton agrees with St. Thomas Aquinas that plays which are not contrary to faith and morals "are of theyre own nature indifferent, yea beeing recreative are howlden good" (fol. 15<sup>r</sup>), but he contends that this authoritative pronouncement of the Angelic Doctor is for the laity, not for the priesthood; and he quotes St. Ambrose to the effect that there would be no difference between people and priests if both were bound by the same laws. The sacred calling of clerics demands that they should serve as models to the laity by being mirrors of piety and patterns of mortification; and thus it is not lawful or decent for them to frequent theatres, thereby setting an example of lightness and vanity and putting themselves in the fashions of the time.

To this general rule there is only one exception, which is provided for in the prohibition. The assistants to the archpriest may grant permission to a priest to attend a play in a public theatre under two conditions only: first, that the play be such as "deliuering mater of ciuil mirth, and moral discourses only, without mixture, or aspersion of any thing that may iustly tend to the derision of religion, or the teaching of uice, or the corrupting of good manners" (fol. 14<sup>v</sup>); and second, that the priest "is unknown to ye companie, or not known to bee a Preist" (fol. 18<sup>v</sup>).

This exception, however, is, in the estimation of Fr. Colleton, virtually a nullity, because, as he warns Fr. Leke, it will be difficult to prove that the plays which are staged in the Jacobean playhouses are of the type designated as lawful by St. Thomas Aquinas,

there beeing ordinarily in most of them, either some passage, or gird against religion, or some wanton, and lasciuious trick, or some fine cosenage, or some egregious flatterie, or some excellent ill policie, or some shamefull trecherie, or some odious calumnie, or some scoff against particular persons, or nations, or some other notable bad qualitie, so expressed, so delineated, so pourtraicted, so set forth to life, as if the mater were then in teaching for others to learn it. Whereupon there is little doubt, but that many of the beehowlders return from the playes far worse galled in sowl, and conscience then they came. And how can it bee thought otherwise? For such playes are made to sport, and delight the auditorie, which consisting most of young gallants, and Protestants (for no true Puritanes will endure to bee present at playes) how unlikely is it, but there are, and must bee, at least some passages in the playes, which may relish, and tickle the humor of such persons, or else good night to the players (folios 12<sup>v</sup> and 13<sup>r</sup>).

We may agree with Fr. Colleton that many Jacobean plays are offensive from the moral standpoint, and yet a considerable number, notably those of Shakespeare, cannot be condemned as contrary to faith and morals. We mention Shakespeare because there can hardly be any question that his plays are involved in this controversy, inasmuch as the prohibition was issued less than a year after his death. Fr. Colleton attacks Jacobean plays because they present realistic portrayals of evil, and also because they contain individual passages of a sensual or irreligious appeal. If we take Shakespeare as a test case, we may grant that all the wicked plot-devices listed by Fr. Colleton will be found in his plays, but we must add that the dramatist always manages to arouse our moral condemnation for the characters who use these devices. It will not do, therefore, to maintain with regard to the "fine cosenage" of Richard III, the "egregious flatterie" of Goneril and Regan, the "shamefull trecherie" of Iago, and the like, that "the beehowlders presence is a kinde of favour, and approbation of that which is donn beefore, and for them" (fol. 14<sup>v</sup>). In fact, the rigoristic and even Puritanical doctrine

which Fr. Colleton lays down would spell the end of creative art as we have it in drama. All that would be permissible would be plays "deliuering mater of ciuil mirth, and moral discourses."

As regards individual passages, Shakespeare is singularly free from what Fr. Colleton styles a "gird against religion"; in fact, he displays a distinct fondness for Catholicism as exemplified in his sympathetic portrayals of friars and nuns. However, his plays do contain passages which cater to the low taste of his audience, but it is worthy of note that the offensive matter is introduced in connection with puns, and thus does not enter into the action of the play. He is guilty of vulgarity but not of sensuality. In a word, if priests are to be prohibited from attending Jacobean plays, it should be for the reasons which Fr. Colleton has already adduced, namely, that the playhouses have an evil reputation and that clerics should set an example to the laity, and not for the reasons which he urges in his evaluation of those plays.

Fr. Leke's objection that the plays which he had attended had no more offence in them than the plays acted in colleges and universities furnished Fr. Colleton with an opportunity to draw a line of demarcation between common players and collegial players. He claims that the word *histrion* as used in the canon of the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1215), which forbids priests to patronize actors, "denominateth a common stage-player, and that professeth himself a player, and liueth by the gain thereof, as by his trade, or occupation, a taxation to unworthie to bee laid on the actours of scholastical, or collegial playes, who are commonly youthes of the best parentage among the companie, and of noblest towardnesse" (fol. 78<sup>r</sup>). He also points out that professional actors are reputed infamous not only by canon law but also by English law. Thus there is a vast difference between collegial actors and common players, just as there is a vast difference between the places where the plays are acted: "the one a college, a place of learning, and pietie; the other a theater, a place of licentiousness, where the gallants of the kingdome flock to see, and to bee seen, and not all for good ends" (fol. 79<sup>r</sup>).

We cannot quarrel with the argument which Fr. Colleton bases on the canon of the Fourth Council of the Lateran. The real reasons why clerics should not patronize professional actors are the necessity of refraining from entertainments which are unbecoming to their sacred calling and the necessity of avoiding



an occasion of scandal to the laity. As a matter of fact, the decrees of most provincial and diocesan synods of our own time can be cited in support of this position. But when Fr. Colleton scorns professional players for their lack of legal standing and for their commercialization of the art of drama, he makes no allowance for the rise of actors in public esteem since the ancient days when they were reputed infamous, and, moreover, he parts company immediately with St. Thomas Aquinas. The legalistic term "infamous" goes back to St. Augustine (354-430), who recoiled with horror from the popular plays of the later Roman empire, which, we may infer, were grossly indecent. In *De Civitate Dei* (II, 27) he records that the actors of those plays "were deprived of civil rights, struck off the list of voters, recognized as base persons, and declared infamous by the praiseworthy genius of Roman virtue." Fr. Colleton can thus remind Fr. Leke that St. Augustine did not hesitate to declare that to spend money on actors is a monstrous fault, akin to giving money to harlots.

It is a far cry from St. Augustine to St. Thomas Aquinas, who was born some ten years after the Fourth Council of the Lateran. We have already referred to the passage in the *Summa Theologica* (II-II, 168, 3, ad 3), in which St. Thomas maintains that, since the object of professional actors is "to cheer the heart of man," a lawful occupation may be assigned to them; and therefore that it is proper to reward them for their services. It is true that in another passage (II-II, 87, 2, ad 2) he echoes St. Augustine, when he writes: "On the other hand, certain things are said to be ill-gotten, because they are gotten of a shameful cause, for instance of whoredom or stage-playing, and the like." There is no contradiction between these two passages, because in the second passage St. Thomas underlines the exception to his main doctrine which he laid down in the first passage, namely, that if a man "maintains comedians who practise unlawful mirth, he sins as encouraging them in their sin." Even though Fr. Colleton maintains that St. Thomas wrote for the laity, it is strange that he missed the two main points which are stressed by the Angelic Doctor: that professional actors possess a legal status, and that their commercialization of the art of drama should not carry with it a social stigma.

The indictment of professional actors which Fr. Colleton bases on English law is also largely an inheritance from the past.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth a statute passed in 1572 classed common players, who were not licensed by some nobleman of the realm, with rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars. But since 1572 there had been a notable improvement in the social status of the actor. In 1618, when Fr. Colleton wrote his rejoinder, the members of the London companies were not handicapped by any legal difficulties. In fact, when James I came to the throne in 1603, all recognized companies came under the royal patronage. Moreover, in his eagerness to discredit professional actors, Fr. Colleton forgets that the prohibition did not forbid priests to patronize these actors when they produced plays in places other than the public playhouses.

Since the *raison d'être* of the prohibition is scandal, Fr. Colleton dwells on this topic at great length. He insists that during a time of persecution, when their religion is proscribed, and when they themselves are thrown into prison, clerical playgoers are bound to be an occasion of scandal to others. In his opinion this is the most telling argument in favour of the prohibition. A period of persecution is a time not for mirth but for mourning; and thus it is inevitable that those who see a priest in the playhouse will deem him "nothing fit to haue the guiding of other folks sowls, who in no better manner guideth and commandeth his own irregular affections" (fol. 28<sup>v</sup>). Then, too, the laity will be scandalized when they discover that priests are using their offerings to defray the "unfrugal and noted expenses" of playgoing. Furthermore, lay Catholics, who are not accustomed to inquire in advance concerning the nature of the play which they plan to attend, will conclude, on seeing a priest in the audience, that all plays are lawful. And finally, the light conduct of clerical playgoers is guaranteed to create a bad impression on non-Catholics.

Fr. Leke's three supplementary objections to the prohibition, namely, that the Benedictines and the Jesuits are not forbidden to attend plays, that the archpriest lacks the authority to issue a prohibition *sub gravissima poena*, and that the prohibition is a violation of ecclesiastical liberty are unceremoniously disposed of by Fr. Colleton. If the Benedictines and the Jesuits had been guilty of resorting to playhouses, they also would have been prohibited by their superiors. The archpriest can issue a prohibition under any penalty contained in the commission given to

him by Pope Paul V, according to which he "hath authoritie to direct, admonish, reprehend, and chastise" (fol. 53<sup>v</sup>). And, as far as ecclesiastical liberty is concerned, it is ridiculous to assert that the rights of clerics confer on them the privilege of attending worldly entertainments in public playhouses of dubious repute.

Since Fr. Leke was "a preist antient, and imprisoned for religion," he was distinctly vulnerable when he so far forgot himself as to "goe from prison to playhouse, from a place of confessing religion to a place of professing vanitie" (fol. 16<sup>v</sup>). Consequently Fr. Colleton does not scruple to make effective use of the *argumentum ad hominem*. "Time, high time," he exclaims, "that our good Lord look down upon us with eyes of mercie, when preists liuing in persecution, liuing in prison, and bordering upon old age, shall reckon it an insufferable burthen, to bee debarred from visiting common play-houses . . ." (fol. 61). In fact, he does not allow Fr. Leke to forget that as an elderly priest it is his special duty to give good example to the laity, and particularly to young people. For instance, in answering Fr. Leke's contention that the principal Catholics of London attend plays, he asserts that it is only young Catholics of both sexes that resort to the theatres. This being the case, he warns Fr. Leke that "it cannot bee doubted, but that your example in using to playes, beeing an antient Preist, and for your natural good parts reputed extraordinarie, is a strong inuitation to ye younger sort of following your stepps, and consequently scandalous . . ." (fol. 40<sup>v</sup>). It follows that Fr. Leke's belief that his "ghostly children" are not scandalized by his playgoing is wishful thinking, because, if they were scandalized, he would be the last person to whom they would reveal it.

As a parting shot, Fr. Colleton quotes a passage from the Council of Trent first in Latin and then in translation ("The English for the unlearned"), which stresses the dignity and the duties of the priesthood. This passage is to serve both of them "as a looking-glass, wherein wee may see what is required at our hands . . ." (fol. 88<sup>v</sup>).

At first sight it seems strange that these Jacobean priests could indulge in the luxury of a controversy on playgoing at a time when their religion was banned. However, the fact is that from 1617 almost to the end of the reign of James I there was a lull in the persecution. During these years plans were going forward

for the marriage of Prince Charles and the Infanta of Spain, with the result that the laws were not rigorously enforced against recusants. This leniency also explains how it was that Fr. Leke and his colleagues were able to "goe from prison to playhouse." They went to the theatre dressed as laymen, and, according to Fr. Colleton, they did not stand among the groundlings in the pit but occupied seats in one of the galleries. If they were confined in a Southwark prison like the Marshalsea or the Clink, they would be within easy reach of the Globe and the other playhouses of the Bankside.

It would seem that playgoing was Fr. Leke's one weakness, for nowhere in his lengthy rejoinder does Fr. Colleton bring any other accusation against him. For instance, there is no suggestion that he has been negligent in ministering to the spiritual needs of his "ghostly children." A priest "bordering upon old age," he had served for many years on the English mission. On February 20, 1595, he witnessed the trial of Fr. Robert Southwell. His report of this trial contains a striking passage at arms between Topcliffe and Fr. Southwell regarding a new torture devised by the informer.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the controversy we must now pronounce the view that Catholics, like Puritans, ostracized the playhouses of Elizabeth and James as untenable. The number of clerical playgoers could not have been large, but it was probably larger than Fr. Colleton was willing to admit. He asserts that the prohibition, although it was couched in general terms, was aimed directly at Fr. Leke and two other priests. However, the fact that the opposition to the prohibition was so strong suggests that the number of clerical playgoers was larger than three. Moreover, evidence has been adduced to prove that during the years of the controversy Tobie Mathew and Fr. Orazio Busino were visiting the playhouses.<sup>2</sup> We know that Tobie Mathew was in England from May 1617 until January 1619, and it is the general opinion that he was ordained a priest by Cardinal Bellarmine in 1614. At any rate, on February 7, 1618, John Chamberlain wrote to Carleton: "Yesterday I met Master Tobie Mathew whom I had not seen these six months since which time to my seeming he is much defeated. He told me he was going to the play at the

<sup>1</sup> *Publications of the Catholic Record Society*, V, 335.

<sup>2</sup> See Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York, 1941), pp. 70 and 78.

Blackfriars but methinks playeing and Fridays fasting agree not so well together as prayeing in a man of so much profession."<sup>1</sup> Fr. Orazio Busino, who was the chaplain to the Venetian Embassy in London during the years 1617 and 1618, recorded his impressions of the Jacobean playhouses in his diary and letters.

As regards the laity, there is a sharp difference of opinion between Fr. Leke, who states that "the principal Catholicks about London" resorted to the theatres, and Fr. Colleton, who insists that the Catholic playgoers comprised "the young of both sexes." No doubt Fr. Leke included among his "principal Catholicks" the ambassadors of France, Spain, Venice and other Catholic countries. It is on record that these ambassadors visited the playhouses, sometimes with their entire retinue. And Fr. Colleton's statement, taken in connection with his other comments on the playgoers of the age, means little more than that the average Jacobean audience was predominantly a youthful audience. The expression "the young of both sexes" suggests youthful couples, young wives and their husbands, young ladies and their escorts. These young Catholics of the early seventeenth century donned their holiday attire when they went to the theatre. Fr. Colleton did not approve of this custom, and yet in making playgoing a gala occasion these young people were paying an unconscious tribute to the art of the drama, and frequently to the supreme master of that art.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, ed. Norman E. McClure, II, 135.

# GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS'S "SPELT FROM SIBYL'S LEAVES"

By

DENNIS WARD

EARNEST, earthless, equal, attuneable, vaulty, voluminous, . .  
stupendous  
Evening strains to be time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all,  
hearse-of-all night.

THE first four epithets in this cumulative opening line express, primarily, a mood—a *response* to evening. In the description "earnest, earthless, equal, attuneable," the evening is instressed, and the reader is given not merely a description of evening, but a conditioned response—an impression of evening as proved upon the mind and senses of the poet. It is "earnest" because it is identified as a time of emotional stress; it is "earthless" in that the sky continues to hold the light after the earth has faded from view under the shadow of approaching night: ". . . her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height waste; . . ."

At this moment the poet's mind seems to be drawn up out of his earthly self to an "earnest" contemplation of spiritual rather than worldly reality. As day and night are held in the moment of pause, balanced and "equal," the evening is "attuneable" to the mood of the poet-priest in that it images his own spiritual struggle to distinguish between "black" and "white," "right" and "wrong," in all their multitudinous combinations and shades. The two epithets "vaulty" and "voluminous" inscape the properties of the evening itself and express its essential awe-inspiring feature—the impression of infinite space.

In both sense and sound connotations these two words convey the idea of emptiness and magnitude that belongs to the half-lit



sky of a clear evening. "Vaulty" has a hollow, almost ominous sound, which is emphasized by the distinct quality of the two adjoining consonants "l" and "t," which, in an oral reading (for Hopkins has warned us that his poetry must be read aloud), breaks the word into distinct sound units—"vaul-ty"—and leaves a kind of catch or hollow between the two parts. The billowing "voluminous," with that extraordinarily long *u*-syllable, adds to the idea of vastness and carries also the idea of light through the inset "-luminous."

The stress-pause that falls between "voluminous" and "stupendous" ("voluminous . ' . stupendous") is a natural breath-pause; but it takes its main stress from the fact that the whole line is comprised of epithets, and it is a natural condition of cumulative expression that a pause—a kind of marshalling pause—should precede the final unit. In this instance, "stupendous," with its explosive "p" in the stressed syllable, comes as the summation of the whole descriptive sequence, the final epithet that fuses together the stress and scape of the evening into one vast image of immensity. The stress-pause marks also the change from falling to rising rhythm for that single, conclusive word. "Stupendous," then, receives its emphasis from three main causes: a natural sense-rhythm stress, a preceding stress-pause, and a shift from falling to rising rhythm. The substantive, "evening," takes a much lighter stress and is pitched lower, so that, taking it in another sense, it does have an *evening* (referring back to "equal") effect on the movement.

The verb "strains" comes out very long in the reading and seems to have two functions: it suggests that the evening "strains" in the sense of "striving to be," while at the same time capturing the image of the last light of evening ("her wild hollow hoarlight") draining out of the sky. Through this double function of the word we get the combined ideas of the evening losing its identity in the encroaching darkness and of its fulfilling its destiny in becoming night—for Hopkins an exact parallel with the merging of the individual and divine personalities in that state of divine "correspondence" or "doing-agree." Evening is striving to be "time's vast, womb-of-all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all night"; and this night becomes the symbol of eternity, the beginning and end, the birth and the death, the fulfilment of all temporal things—God.

We are given a good insight into the religious significance of natural phenomena for Hopkins in his reflections upon his first sight of the Northern Lights. After describing its visual effects, he continues:

This busy working of nature wholly independent of the earth and seeming to go on in a strain of time not reckoned by our reckoning of days and years but simpler and as if correcting the preoccupation of the world by being preoccupied with and appealing to and dated to the day of judgement was like a new witness to God and filled me with delightful fear.<sup>1</sup>

This idea of Nature and natural beauty as the "word of God" to be apprehended and instressed by the individual man in his desire for "correspondence" with God is always with Hopkins. It is the subject of much of his prose and a consistent theme in his poetry. Perhaps the most direct statement of his belief in natural phenomena as the divine medium is in the passage from *The Wreck of the Deutschland*:

I kiss my hand  
To the stars, lovely-asunder  
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and  
Glow, glory in thunder;  
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:  
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,  
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;

For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.  
And in the prose *Comments on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, in which he probes the whole question of correspondence between Self and God, he declares:

God's utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is this world. This world, then, is word, expression, news, of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God, and its life or work to name and praise him.<sup>2</sup>

For Hopkins, then, such comparisons and associations as those in *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves* are of fundamental significance to the essential meaning of the poem and the total experience it seeks to express.

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<sup>1</sup> *Notebooks and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited Humphrey House, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Gerard Manley Hopkins, Priest and Poet*, by John Pick, p. 49.

Her fond yellow hornlight wound to the west, her wild hollow  
hoarlight hung to the height  
Waste; her earliest stars, earl-stars, stars principal, overbend us,  
Fire-featuring heaven.

The first difficulty here is "hornlight"; does it refer to the moon or to the glow thrown into the sky by the setting sun? Dr. F. R. Leavis has written:

The "yellow hornlight" is, of course, the setting moon; "fond"—tender, soft, sympathetic, clinging as if reluctant to go.<sup>1</sup>

Professor W. H. Gardner notes that there is a discrepancy in the description if it is so interpreted:

... whereas the fading "hoarlight" in the zenith can truly be said to *waste*, the moon would surely grow brighter as the night deepened; and the setting of the moon (the early draft has "low with the west") could hardly be called "wasting."<sup>2</sup>

Even so, he holds the same opinion as Dr. Leavis: "There can be no doubt that *hornlight* means moon." The main point of the discussion seems to be whether "horn" is meant to suggest shape or colour. In his notes on sky-scapes Hopkins does use the word to describe shapes, as in:

First saw the Northern Lights. My eye was caught by beams of light and dark very like the crown of horny rays the sun makes behind a cloud.<sup>3</sup>

But in this poem the main emphasis seems to be on colour; for it is necessary to complete the parallel of the two kinds of light thrown off by the setting sun: "the yellow-rose light like a lamp"<sup>4</sup> that "wound to the west" and the "hoarlight" that "hung to the height." This emphasis on the separate colour shades of the evening light is substantiated by a description of a strikingly similar scene, which Hopkins recorded in his *Journal* on December 16th, 1883 (the poem was probably written at the end of 1884):

... there was a pale gold colour brightening and fading by turns as the sun went down. After sunset the horizon was lined a long way by a glowing tawny light, not very pure in colour. . . . The glowing vapour above this was as yet colourless. . . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Bearings in English Poetry*, by F. R. Leavis, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, Vol. II, by W. H. Gardner.

<sup>3</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, by G. F. Lahey, S.J., p. 168.

I take "hornlight," then, to refer to this "tawny light" that gradually winds to the west as the sun sinks farther and farther below the horizon. But the image does have other connotations, both of shape *and* sound. The word "horn" seems to have fascinated Hopkins; for as early as September 24th, 1863, he had made speculative notes on its derivatives. A particularly interesting comment is: "From the curve of the horn, *κορωνίς*, corona, crown."<sup>1</sup> to which is added the note: "*κορωνίς* is the name for the flourish at the end of a book, and also for the mark over a crasis, shaped thus *◌̂*." The image that Hopkins seems to have in mind in the poem is the curved sweep of the bowl of a musical horn, which is associated with the concave sweep of the evening sky. But as far as the colour is concerned, it must be remembered that it is a "*fond* yellow hornlight"; and here Hopkins is using the word "*fond*," not in the sense suggested by Dr. Leavis, but in the rarer sense of "that has lost its savour."<sup>2</sup> It is not the brazen, metallic light of the polished instrument, but the pale, "insipid"<sup>3</sup> glow of a "yellow-rose light like a lamp."

So much for the colour and shape connotations; but taken in its context and in conjunction with other evocative words, it also images the fading evening in the winding note of the hunting horn. The "hornlight" is said to have "wound" to the west, and the musical connotation is reinforced by that of "strains" in the image of evening dying away into night, and in the description of evening as "attuneable." As W. A. M. Peters, S.J., has remarked: "... we do not only see the moon setting, but hear her go down on the tones of the horn that is 'wound'";<sup>4</sup> though, again, I think we must reject the "moon" interpretation.

The "hoarlight" is the pale reflection of the sun's light that still hangs in the upper sky after the sun itself has fallen below the level of the horizon. It is "wild" in that it is remote from its source, "hollow" because it appears to hang, like a transparent mist, in the vault of heaven, which Hopkins once described to his friend Dixon when criticizing one of Browning's images:

The vault of heaven is a vault, *hollow*, concave towards us,  
convex upwards . . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. I, p. 728, col. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, by W. A. M. Peters, S.J., p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and R. W. Dixon*, edited C. C. Abbott, p. 58.

It is "waste" partly because it is isolated, left over from the evening, and partly because it is fading, wasting away. It is interesting to note how "waste" takes importance and unusual emphasis from its position at the end of the sentence and the beginning of the line:

. . . her wild hollow hoarlight hung to the height  
Waste; her earliest stars . . .

The word itself seems to be isolated in the same way as the "hoarlight" it qualifies. Up to this point in the poem the emphasis has been on the fading light—the passing of evening. Now it shifts to the advance of night and the darkening of the sky; from the passive to the active, as it were. The impression of evening winding away to the west brings the complementary description of night being drawn across the sky like a huge curtain and gradually blackening the "hollow" vault.

This blacking out of the sky is beautifully represented in the three star-images. The first stars to appear are faint and indistinct in the wan sky; they are the "earliest" stars. Then the deepening of the night sky throws them into clearer relief. They become more definite, and the descriptive "earliest" is tightened to "earl," thereby shifting the emphasis from temporal precedence to precedence of degree. Then, finally, when night has set in, they appear in their full glory—"stars principal." Night, represented in the star-imagery, moves across the sky like a great state procession: first, the heralds ("earliest stars"), then the courtiers ("earl-stars"), and, finally, the royal principals themselves ("stars principal"). The pageant appears to follow the curve of the "vaulty" sky (now invisible except for the disposition of the stars) and therefore seems to "overbend" the earth. The night sky is *featured* by the fire-dints of the stars both in the sense of being flecked by their points of fire and of being represented or outlined by them.

\* \* \*

For earth her being has unbound, her dapple is at  
an end, as-  
stray or aswarm, all throughther, in throngs; self in self steeped  
and pashed—quite  
Disremembering, dismembering all now.

The omission of the article in the opening statement of this passage allows "earth" to take on the properties of a *proper* noun ("For earth *her* being has unbound, *her* dapple . . ."); though, as W. A. M. Peters points out,<sup>1</sup> "earth" is not actually personified. Such semi-personification (Peters describes it as "impersonation") is common in Old English poetry, as in *Beowulf*, where Wulfgar greets the Geatish adventurers with:

Now you may go in your war-gear under battle-helmets to see  
Hrothgar; let your battle-shields, spears, deadly shafts, await here the  
issue of the speaking.<sup>2</sup>

Earth has "unbound" her "being" in the sense that she has spun away from the light and that her features are hidden, swallowed up, in the night—her personality. "Unbound" looks forward to the parallel image of life winding off *her* being on "two spools"—"black, white; right, wrong." In "For earth her being" the subject is placed directly against the object in the inverted sentence construction to give greater emphasis or "stress" to the relationship, which would have been slackened in the normal arrangement of subject-verb-object.

The image "her dapple is at an end" refers back to the half-light of evening, which has now subsided completely into night, the moment of balance and uncertainty resolved. The features of the visible world of evening are "astray or asworn," that is, they are invisible, lost to the eye as their outlines and personalities are dissolved into the neutralizing darkness, "all throughther" in the sense of being merged and blended together. Individual identities are contracted, ground down and dissolved into the night, even as living thoughts and memories are dissolved into eternity. At this point comes the shift to the "self" of the poet, the application of the parable of the evening to his own individual position and the contemplation of that complex relationship between "Self in God" and that "skeined stained veined variety" of Self that he describes in his *Comments on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*:

I find myself both as a man and as myself something most determined and distinctive and higher pitched than anything else I see; I find myself and my pleasures and pains, my powers and experiences,

<sup>1</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, by W. A. M. Peters, S.J., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Beowulf*, lines 395-8.



my deserts and guilt, my shame and sense of beauty, my dangers, hopes, fears, and all my fate, more important to myself than anything I see.<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Heart, you round me right

With: Our evening is over us; our nightwhelms,whelms, and will end us.

Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish damask the tool-smooth bleak light; black,  
Ever so black on it.

So comes the inner prompting: "Heart, you round me right"; that is, you prompt me aright, where "round" is used in the archaic sense of "to whisper or inform," as in Shakespeare's:

They're here with me already, whispering, rounding  
"Sicilia is a so-forth."<sup>2</sup>

This inner stirring of the heart, this prompting, is the feeling of God's stress, which must be "instressed, stressed" by the recipient and made active:

... this is truly God's finger touching the very vein of personality, which nothing else can reach and man can respond to by no play whatever, by bare acknowledgement only, the counter stress which God alone can feel ("subito probas eum"), the aspiration in answer to his inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

for:

... as mere possibility, passive power, is not power proper and has no activity it cannot of itself come to stress, cannot instress itself.<sup>4</sup>

This cry "Heart, you round me right . . .", which forms the climax of the octave of the sonnet and acknowledges the feeling of God's stress, is almost identical with that dramatic passage in *The Windhover*:

My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!  
Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here  
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion  
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

<sup>1</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *The Winter's Tale*, I, ii, 217.

<sup>3</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

with its magnificent shock-transition from the reflective octave to the immediacy of the sestet in that swift, urgent cry, "here Buckle!"

"Our evening," "our night" (our reckoning—eternity) comes upon us and hovers over us "and" (heavily stressed) "will end us," even as the night has overwhelmed and obliterated the recently visible objects and features of the world. The swelling, enveloping effect of "whelms, whelms" parallels the image of night spreading over that "voluminous" evening sky.

Those features that remain visible, the "beak-leaved boughs," represent those traits of personality that turn the mind to the contemplation of the significance of self in isolation instead of in relation to God. This was the sin of Lucifer; for:

This song of Lucifer was a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape, and like a performance on the instrument and organ of his own being; it was a sounding, as they say, of his own trumpet and a hymn in his own praise.<sup>1</sup>

This, for Hopkins, was the great testing point of his faith, as it was the principal inspiration of his greatest poetry—the tremendous impulse of his religious faith acting upon that Self "more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor."<sup>2</sup> These boughs are charged with menace; they are "beak-leaved" and "dragonish" in that they seem to spread out between the poet and the heavens, denying the sublimation of worldly reality. Etched (damasked) against the "tool-smooth" evenness of the night sky, they break the serenity of the poet's faith. "Black, ever so black on it," they are dark and ominous; for the struggle is not resolved with the dedication. It is a constant struggle in which there is no relenting:

I have not only made my vows publicly some two and twenty times but I make them to myself every day.<sup>3</sup>

In the line "Only the beak-leaved boughs dragonish damask the tool-smooth bleak light," the word "dragonish" sets the whole mood. Its position is particularly important; for set as it is between the subject and the verb, it seems to fulfil the double function of adjective and adverb and to qualify both. It belongs

<sup>1</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence of G. M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon*, p. 75.

chiefly to the description of the boughs, but its effect extends to and defines "damask."

\* \* \*

Our tale, O our oracle! Let life, waned, ah let  
life wind

Off her once skeined stained veined variety upon, all on two  
spools: part, pen, pack

Now her all in two flocks, two folds—black, white; right,  
wrong; . . .

Night portends the blacking out of *our* "dappled" existence. "*Our* tale" and "*our* oracle" must be to spin off these entangled threads of our personalities into black and white, right and wrong. The two stressed "all"s emphasize the fact that there is no fragment of our existence that is not subject to this division, while the complexity of the separation, the identification, is expressed in the tangled image of a "skeined stained veined variety" and in the inverted balance of "black, white; right, wrong," where black is paired with right and white with wrong. It is the difficulty of choice expressed in Hopkins's *Comments*:

. . . there is an infinity of possible strains of action and choice for each possible self in these worlds (or, what comes to the same thing, in virgin matter) and the sum of these strains would be also like a pomegranate in the round, which God sees whole but of which we see at the best only one cleave. Rather we see the world as one cleave and the life of each person as one vein or strain of colour in it.<sup>1</sup>

Yet this division between right and wrong must be made; the separate strands must be identified.

\* \* \*

. . . reckon but, reck but, mind

But these two; ware of a world where but these two tell, each  
off the other; of a rack

Where, selfwrung, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts  
against thoughts in groans grind.

The first part of this last phase is straightforward enough. "Reckon but, reck but, mind but these two"; we must be constantly aware of the uncompromising division between the two con-

<sup>1</sup> *Notebooks and Papers*, pp. 328-9.

ditions, right and wrong. But "ware of a world where but these two tell" is more ambiguous. Usually "ware" is taken to mean "beware"; then the last lines may be taken as referring to the terrible fate, the agony of indecision, of those who fail to make this distinction between black and white. In this interpretation "where but these two tell" would mean "where any but these two," which would refer to a complex state in which "right, wrong; black, white" were not clearly identified. But though "ware" does have this sense of "beware," in that it warns of the struggle to come, its primary sense, I believe, is the imperative "be aware." This continues the idea expressed in "reckon but, reck but, mind but these two" and demands the same meaning for "but" as "only." The passage might then be paraphrased roughly as: consider, take account of, bear in mind, only these two conditions; be aware of a world where only these two are significant, and where each is set against and informs against the other.

According to Hopkins, we must be aware of this world and of these distinctions; and, equally important, we must be aware of the fact that the acceptance of these conditions will not bring their fulfilment, but only the struggle *towards* fulfilment. The dedication is a dedication to strife and torment, to a victory that lies in the struggle, fought out on "a rack where, selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe- and shelterless, thoughts against thoughts in groans grind" (and note particularly that the agony is "selfwring, selfstrung"). We can find an excellent parallel for this final resolution in the sestet of *The Windhover* (for that, too, is far from being the "weary surrender" that many critics have thought it):

. . . sheer plod makes plough down sillion  
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,  
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

It is conceived in the same spirit as the slash and thrust of the sonnet in honour of *St. Alphonsus Rodriguez*:

And those strokes once that gashed flesh and galled shield  
Should tongue that time now, trumpet now that field,  
And, on the fighter, forge his glorious day.

These and other sonnets of Hopkins may have, as Bridges claimed, a "terrible pathos"; but they are conceived in a mood

very different to that of "weary surrender." They are conceived in a spirit of complete dedication:

When a man has given himself to God's service, when he has denied himself and followed, he has fitted himself to receive and does receive from God a special guidance, a more particular providence.<sup>1</sup>

It is the spirit of the Jesuit prayer:

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous: to serve Thee as Thou deservest, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for reward—save that of knowing that I am doing Thy will.

## REVIEWS

### TOO MANY PEOPLE?

*Four Thousand Million Mouths*, edited by F. Le Gros Clark and N. W. Pirie (Oxford University Press 12s 6d).

*Geography of Hunger*, by Josué de Castro (Gollancz 18s).

THERE HAS BEEN a good deal of pessimism in recent years concerning the future of world food supplies. Some writers, especially in the United States, have argued that these supplies can not only not be increased to any important extent, but may even diminish in the near future on account of soil erosion. Others, while admitting that some increase is possible, do not think that it could keep pace with the present growth in world population. Hence the amount of food available per person will steadily decrease, even if total production can be increased. The remedy usually proposed is a drastic and more or less compulsory introduction of contraceptive methods among the more rapidly growing populations of the world.

Alarms of this sort have been recurring at regular intervals during the past 150 years, but so far they have always proved groundless. It is questionable whether there is any large area of the world where living standards have declined significantly during the past fifty or hundred years owing to increasing numbers, and there is certainly none which has reached the limit of its capacity to produce more food. This must not, however, be made an excuse for undue complacency. Obviously there must be some limit to the number of people which the earth can support, and it is a matter of considerable importance to know whether we are approaching this limit or not. There are two

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of G. M. Hopkins and R. W. Dixon*, p. 93.

distinct questions to be considered: first, can food production keep pace with probable population increase during the fairly near future—say for the next hundred years or so? Second, could it do so indefinitely, into a much more remote future? The two questions are quite distinct and should not be confused. The first concerns us directly. We have a duty to provide for our more immediate successors on this earth, and to ensure, so far as we reasonably and legitimately can, that they shall come into a world which can provide them with adequate means of support. But further than this we cannot usefully go. It is mere foolishness to start worrying now about the hypothetical state of the world in two or three hundred years' time, and to try to impose new social and ethical forms upon mankind now, in order to produce a society then which shall appeal to our present-day planners. The people of 2100 A.D. will no doubt have their own problems, but they will be in a much better position to solve them than we are, and their solutions may be very different from ours. Any plans which we may make now for their benefit are likely to be as wide of the mark as would have been those of eighteenth century planners planning the lives of twentieth century man.

The two books under review provide a welcome antidote to the excessive and almost paralysing anxieties of so many neo-Malthusians today. In both, the authors hold that it is possible to provide adequately for a world population much larger than the present one, and they refuse to be terrorized by the more remote future, although some of the contributors to *Four Thousand Million Mouths* are obviously uneasy about it. Beyond this, however, the general approach to the problem is very different in each.

*Four Thousand Million Mouths* is a collection of essays written by well-known agricultural scientists and nutrition experts, each of whom examines some particular aspect of the problem of increasing food production. The scope of the enquiry is limited; it is concerned almost entirely with the possibilities of increasing food production from land already under cultivation, by methods whose efficacy has already been established by experience or scientific research. It does not deal with the problem of bringing into cultivation any of the vast areas of unused land which still remain, nor do the authors speculate to any extent on the possibilities of entirely new and untried methods. This restriction is justified by the fact that they are concerned primarily to suggest an immediate policy; the intensification of production on land already in use would certainly give the quickest return for the money and effort involved.

Even within these limited terms of reference, it is clear that very substantial increases could be obtained in the near future. Dr. Bawden,



for instance, in discussing food losses due to plant diseases, considers that the average yield of world crops could be doubled if they were all as healthy as the crops of this country. And even these latter are capable of much improvement. Other contributions deal with the improvements which could result from the better control of soil erosion, from the application of scientific methods of plant breeding, from a more extended use of fertilizers, etc. The general conclusion which emerges is that we can have reasonable confidence in world food supplies over the next hundred years at least, provided we are willing to make the necessary effort. After that, if population continued to increase, much would depend on the extent to which the uncultivated areas of the earth—which in the aggregate are many times larger than the total cultivated area—could be brought into use.

*Geography of Hunger* is concerned essentially with the same question, but from a much wider point of view. The main theme of the book is expressed in the title: it is a survey of world hunger. The author holds that a great part of the population of the world is suffering permanently from hunger—not in general from the overt hunger which accompanies famine conditions, but from more or less serious malnutrition resulting from a diet which is deficient in quality even when it is not inadequate in quantity. He provides an impressive body of evidence for this thesis, based for the most part on information collected by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Dr. de Castro argues strongly that the solution of this problem is to be found not in reducing population but in increasing production. If the world's resources were properly developed, it could support a very much larger population than it does now. Even with regard to the long-range prospects the author is optimistic. He holds that the high birth-rate obtaining among the poorer peoples of the world is caused by malnutrition—in particular, by a deficiency of animal protein in their diet—and that an increase in their standard of living would automatically produce a decline in fertility. Some evidence is given for this view, derived partly from feeding experiments on animals and partly from statistics of human birth-rates and protein consumption in the different countries of the world. The evidence, as it stands, is by no means conclusive, but it is certainly worthy of further careful examination. If Dr. de Castro's theory is correct, then the population of the world could be expected ultimately to stabilize itself without artificial controls, provided we make a sufficiently determined effort to raise the standard of living.

It is unfortunately necessary to add that the book has a number of blemishes which will seriously reduce the usefulness which it would otherwise have had. The author is always too ready to make sweeping

generalizations on insufficient evidence. A certain number of errors seem to have got into his statistical data, owing perhaps to careless revision. Most serious of all, his account of the Colonial policies of the Great Powers is unjust and irresponsible in the extreme. Admittedly, these policies have often left much to be desired. But to say, for instance, that the British in India did everything they could to perpetuate famine and starvation there "in the sacred interest of colonial imperialism" is a mere travesty of the facts. The author seems to have relied too heavily on Marxist sources for his history; this may also explain his somewhat idyllic picture of life behind the Iron Curtain at the present time, and his decision not to submit the food situation in Russia to the same searching criticism that he applies to the rest of the world.

In spite of its obvious faults, we may hope that the book will play its part in rousing men's consciences to the urgency of the present world food situation, and in communicating to them some of the author's faith in the possibilities of a satisfactory solution.

JOHN L. RUSSELL

#### PLATO RE-EXAMINED

*Plato's Theory of Ideas*, by Sir David Ross (Oxford, Clarendon Press: London, Geoffrey Cumberlege 18s).

THE NAME of the author is by itself sufficient guarantee that this book is a work of careful and balanced scholarship and one which no serious student of Plato can afford to miss. The aim of Sir David Ross is throughout that of ascertaining what Plato actually said and thought. He does not try to make Plato say what one might like him to have said but keeps faithfully to the available evidence. If one is looking for "exciting" speculations and startling interpretations, one will not find them here. But one will find that sound scholarship in matters Platonic (and Aristotelian) which was characteristic of the older generation of Oxford philosophers and of which Sir David Ross is such a distinguished example.

After discussing the chronological order of the dialogues the author traces the genesis and growth of the theory of Ideas. Believing, rightly of course, that Plato's thought underwent a process of development, he is careful not to read later ideas into what is said in a given dialogue. He shows how the doctrine of the transcendence of the Ideas or Forms was only gradually made explicit, and he argues that it was only in advanced years that Plato made a definite and clear distinction between Ideas and "intermediates," though it has often been supposed that Plato had already conceived this clear distinction by the time he came

to write the *Republic* and that it is expressed in the analysis of the third and fourth sub-sections of the Line. Incidentally, Sir David Ross argues that Plato did not include works of art under the *eikones* of the lowest sub-section of the Line but under "manufactured objects," assigning them to the second sub-section. I do not feel altogether convinced, in view of Plato's statements elsewhere that works of art are imitations of imitations. But the reason given by the author for his view is a good one, namely that the Greeks drew no hard and fast distinction between works of art and other manufactured objects and that it would not naturally occur to a Greek to include works of art with the sort of things which Plato actually mentions in connection with the lowest sub-section of the Line. Possibly my disinclination to accept the author's view is largely due to a reluctance to abandon a theory which one learned long ago and to which one has become accustomed.

Sir David Ross believes that as time went on the theory of Ideas came to occupy a less prominent place in Plato's thought and that the concept of God came to the fore. This seems to me to be quite true and to be borne out by the *Laws*. Whatever one may think of the proposals in that dialogue for an equivalent of the Inquisition, the importance which Plato attached to belief in divine "providence" and goodness is made obvious. And one is not entitled to dismiss what he has to say on the subject as evidence of senility. Plato may have been advanced in years when he wrote the *Laws*, but the work does not show evidence of any failure of mental powers, even if its artistry is not that of the *Symposium*. In regard to the relation between God and the Forms, Sir David Ross understands literally the distinction which is certainly implied in the *Timaeus*. And though in the first volume of my *History of Philosophy* I suggested in a tentative manner a "neo-Platonic" interpretation of Plato's theology, I am now much less inclined to think that it is the right interpretation. It is indeed undeniable that the later Platonists were able to find in the dialogues isolated passages which could serve as a basis for their metaphysical scheme; but it does not follow that Plato himself ever evolved any tidy metaphysical scheme. As for the relation between God and the Good, there have been several able attempts to show that Plato identified them; but, as the author points out, Plato spoke of God as good and not as Goodness.

In the chapter on Plato's "unwritten doctrines" the author rejects the view, ably maintained by Professor Cherniss, that Plato gave no oral instruction in the Academy. The intrinsic probability of this view is, in my opinion, very small; and in spite of Cherniss's arguments I agree with Sir David Ross that "it is certain that Plato did give some oral instruction on philosophy." In the following chapter, on the population of the world of Ideas, the author argues that Aristotle's statement that Plato recognized "Forms as numerous as the things which exist by

nature" (and therefore not Forms of artificial objects) involves a misunderstanding. According to Sir David Ross, Plato recognized Forms of artificial objects like beds and shuttles, which are products of useful arts, but not Forms of the products of the imitative arts. There is certainly much to be said in favour of this view. For example, in the *Republic* Plato speaks of the ideal bed. And the general principle that wherever a common name is used for a number of objects there is a Form would seem to demand Forms of the products of the useful arts. It is true that in the *Parmenides* Socrates wishes to restrict the population of the world of Forms; but he is told by Parmenides that he ought to have the courage of his convictions and abide by his principles. On the other hand I do not feel disposed to attach very much weight to the passage about the ideal bed. After all, Plato also speaks of God making the ideal bed, and Sir David Ross himself does not take this seriously. Moreover, is the view that Plato recognized Forms of the products of the useful arts but not of the products of the imitative arts consistent with the view, maintained by the author, that works of art pertain to the second sub-section of the Line, along with natural objects?

In later chapters the author deals with Plato's theories about numbers and about the relation of numbers to the Ideas or Forms. Aristotle states that Plato came to identify Forms with numbers, though Theophrastus makes a different, though equally definite, statement. The author inclines to think that Plato did not identify the Forms with numbers but that he assigned numbers to Forms, in the sense of classifying them as monadic, dyadic, etc. (There would in any case be ideal numbers, twoness, for example, as distinguished from the many two's, which are not universals but intelligible particulars.) There is certainly no real improbability in the idea that Aristotle was mistaken in this matter or that he misinterpreted Plato. It may perhaps appear at first sight to be inconsistent to say, apropos of Aristotle's statement that it was Plato who "separated" universals, that Aristotle can hardly have been mistaken on this point inasmuch as he spent some nineteen or twenty years in the Academy and then to say, in regard to another point of interpretation, that Aristotle must have misunderstood Plato. But whereas the statement about the "separation" of universals is supported by the testimony, implicit or explicit, of the dialogues themselves and of other sources, some of Aristotle's remarks about Plato can be shown to be false or to involve misunderstanding; and the falsity of certain remarks is obvious to any one who has studied the dialogues. The statement, for example, that Plato employed only two causes, the formal and material, is patently false.

The aim of Sir David Ross's work is to give an account of Plato's theory of Ideas rather than to estimate its value from the philosophical point of view. And the work is markedly economical in this respect,

all "irrelevant" reflections being excluded. But the author would perhaps agree that the great value of Plato is as an awakener to philosophic thought. There is really no system of Plato, to be accepted or rejected as a whole. But Plato opened up, explicitly or implicitly, many, if not most, of the chief philosophical problems which have occupied the attention of European philosophers. And one can learn from him how to philosophize. Possibly one can also sometimes learn how not to philosophize. But to learn in the company of a great philosopher how not to philosophize is at the same time to learn to philosophize.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON

### ALLEGORICAL ARITHMETIC

*A Rebirth of Images and A Study in St. Mark*, by Dr. A. Farrer (Dacre Press, each 25s).

THE FORMER BOOK has for some time been before the public, so that no detailed account of it is called for here. We may, however, mention that Dr. Farrer holds the author of the Apocalypse to have been converted to the Faith in middle-life, perhaps an Asiatic Jew, but very likely familiar with Palestine and even Egypt: he believes also in an "inspiration" which seems nearer to what Catholics mean by "revelation." So forceful was the personality of "John" that though he was very learned and familiar with every kind of symbolism, that of the Old Testament, astronomical, liturgical, numerical and indeed gnostic, it is idle to dissect him, as Dr. Farrer does, into origins, because he dominates everything he uses, and constructs a single poem. However, the jacket of the book is surely wrong in implying that Dr. Farrer is the first to do this; Fr. Allo, O.P., did it, we hold, even better and at least as learnedly (there is no index to Dr. Farrer, save to Biblical references, so we cannot tell if he has studied Fr. Allo); and we wonder, caught up into subtleties, as we must be after reading this book, whether there is a misprint: the author "tries to see . . . how [John] travelled with the images of his Old Testament faith and brought them to a new and Christian birth." Should it not be "travailed"? The metaphor would then be forcefully carried through! We are fully in agreement (is not everyone by now?) with Dr. Farrer's conviction that St. John's prophecy was not mere prediction of events happening in historical sequence, but that he expresses the world-long conflict between the Kingdom of God and of his Christ with that of the God-less Man and Anti-Christ, which was immediately visible for him in the Roman Emperor, as it justifiably may be for us in the Absolute State.

It is true that all of us are controlled more than we think by basic images; that we tend to make patterns of our images and even our



memories, and recast the meaning of our hereditary images. And Dr. Farrer often agrees that St. John may not have been conscious of the use he was making of tradition, nor need he always have made the same use, nor, whatever the author says, is there the least likelihood of the ordinary Christian, Asiatic or not, interpreting much of the Apocalypse with any certainty, any more than scholars can decide which of a score of meanings is the one intended by Dante in his symbols. Still, Dr. Farrer certainly leaves one with the impression that John had actually *all* the possible meanings present to his consciousness, in, for example, his description of the heavenly City, its measurements, the arrangement of its precious stones, and so forth. Although the Apocalypse certainly is a mass of images and a pattern, yet we become alarmed when warned that something of the sort is going to be detected in St. Mark.

As for St. Mark, we say at once Dr. Farrer is far from seeing a clash between history and theology in him, but we ought not, he thinks, to look for a historical *connection* between his paragraphs, or to think that his theology has "made the recovery of the historical facts impossible." On the other hand, we have *not* thought of him as a "mind of great power," nor the pattern of his document as "strong and subtle." It is impossible here to depict graphically the double cycles of thought which control St. Mark's arrangements of, for example, miracles: but we may try to indicate what he is supposed to have had in mind when relating the two miraculous feedings of the multitude. The pattern is set by 2 Kings iv, 42-4. There is a famine. A man brings twenty barley-loaves and ears of corn to Eliseus, who says: "Give it to the people!" His servant protests: "What, this—for 200 men?" Eliseus says: "They shall both eat and leave thereof." And it was so. But then, Moses (*see* Exodus xvi and Numbers xi) asks how he should have flesh to give to the multitude—would all the fish in the sea suffice them? And he is given the Manna, and not fish, indeed, but quails (a fair analogy). Omitting other points, we observe that in the Gospel five loaves feed five thousand and twelve creels are left over; and again, seven loaves feed four thousand and seven creel-fuls are left over. We ourselves having no great head for allegorical arithmetic, must assume (as the author argues) that the first Feeding represents that of the Jews, and the second, that of the Gentiles; *but* the former Feeding does not exhaust the Gift of God, and an immense amount is left over even after the latter one for the feeding of men not yet converted when Mark wrote—but, there would be no third such Eucharist. There is much more: the first miracle of the loaves follows the healing of Jairus's Jewish daughter; the second, that of the pagan Syro-Phoenician's daughter. To say nothing of David's taking five loaves out of the twelve exposition breads, we find that after the



second feeding miracle the apostles noticed that they had only *one* loaf in the boat and were distressed. Our Lord points out that, with Him to bless it, *one* loaf would suffice for all twelve of them, twelve, the ideal Israel of which He was the ideal King-David.

If we say that Dr. Farrer convinces us no more than the late Dr. Verrall did in his *Euripides the Rationalist*, and that we really cannot believe in his Mark the Mystic any more than in Mgr. Knox's irrefutable proof that Queen Victoria wrote *In Memoriam*, we pray not to be thought to be mocking him. The erudition evident throughout the book, the determination to preserve the evangelically historical sense adorned, so to say, by the linking of it up with the Mosaic and prophetic and rabbinic traditions, and the complete difference between Dr. Farrer and, for example, Loisy, who allegorized away St. John, must be amply recognized. He shuns no difficulty—that of the very first sentences of St. Mark's document or its final, the meaning of the "Son of Man" or the secrecy imposed by Christ on the recipients of certain of His miracles. We are not sorry that Dr. Farrer regards Q as over and done with, but we think he regards even the Aramaic Matthew as later than Mark and that the Greek Matthew is certainly no translation of the Aramaic original—and here we can but refer to Abbot Butler's recent book; annoying as it has proved to many a critic. We are not fond of deep psycho-analysis, even though at the deepest depth be found the Holy Ghost.

C. C. MARTINDALE

## DEVON LAND AND DEVON MEN

*Devonshire Studies*, by W. G. Hoskins and H. P. R. Finberg (Jonathan Cape £1 16s 0d).

THIS VERY SCHOLARLY BOOK brings together material of a kind usually available only in the Transactions of local antiquarian societies. The professional historian, above all the social and economic history specialist, will find it of the utmost value, for new light is thrown on many obscure problems of medieval farming, borrowing and lending, and the tenure of land. The ordinary reader who is interested in the history and topography of the wide-spread and varied shire of Devon will also find interesting things.

There is, for example, the "tragi-comedy" of the unhappy Abbot Bonus, brought over from France to rule the Abbey at Tavistock after violent quarrels had rent the community. He, alas, had not the force of character required. Later religious history is illustrated by the story of Presbyterianism, introduced by the Puritan influence of the Bedford family and later collapsing into a multitude of sects.

A great deal of patient research lies behind the story of three families, Cholwich, Galsworthy and Sokespitch. The Cholwich family is traced from the early thirteenth century, and we learn of its gradual expansion, clearing waste land, marrying heiresses, and buying farms. By the sixteenth century they were substantial folk, with silver spoons and other heirlooms. What is of particular interest is the small part the family played in national affairs; they remained peacefully adding acre to acre till they were rich enough to move into the towns and take their place with the gentry of the shire. By 1800 one was Mayor of Tavistock, and reputed an extremely wealthy man. But if the rise was steady, the collapse was swift. By 1857 the Cholwich family was extinct.

There are papers on the wealth of medieval Devon; on the farm labourer through four centuries; the estates of the Caroline gentry, and many other topics. The binding and printing of the book are excellent, and the illustrations interesting.

M. D. R. LEY<sub>s</sub>

## SHORTER NOTICES

*Medieval Philosophy*, by Frederick C. Copleston (Methuen 7s 6d).

THE READER of the Home Study Books series, when harassed by the practical details of *How to Run a Small Farm*, can now seek consolation as far afield as either *West Africa* or *Medieval Philosophy*. Fr. Copleston has been diverted for a short time from his *opus maius* to provide him with an *opus minus* on the latter subject. Of this short introduction there is little to say except that it is, as we should expect, excellently done. It begins with the origins of medieval thought in patristic speculation and leads through the centuries to the eve of the Renaissance in the system of Nicholas of Cusa. A personal vote for the best chapter would be for that on William of Ockham, which in eighteen pages gives an unprecedentedly clear and coherent summary of a far from easy philosopher.

In connection with the Latin Averroists Fr. Copleston mentions both the strange doctrine of double truth, philosophical and theological, conventionally attributed to them and their own claim that in philosophy they were simply engaged in reporting objectively what Aristotle had said. Perhaps this is an opportunity to ventilate the suggestion that their position was not as unintelligible as it is usually represented. May it not have been analogous to the standpoint of a contemporary Catholic who, after studying philosophy at an English

university, might admit both that Hume appeared to be incompatible with the Catholic outlook and that he could see no way to escape Hume's denials? Then he might add that he must in honesty, as a philosopher, pursue the Humian way until such time as he could transcend it or effect a reconciliation, while, as a Catholic, he affirmed all that a Catholic must affirm. Replace Hume by Aristotle as interpreted by Averroes, and you have a conjectural interpretation of the Averroist outlook.

All that needs to be added is congratulation to Fr. Copleston on providing an adequate introduction to a great subject. The British public is beginning to be relatively well provided with accounts, large and small, of medieval philosophy. Does it read them? If so, some potentially fruitful seeds are being sown.

D. J. B. HAWKINS

*The Catholic Who's Who* 1952, edited by Sir Harold J. Hood, Bt. (Burns and Oates 42s).

THIS BOOK, which revives the *Catholic Who's Who* after eleven years, is not so unconventional as Burnand's original production, but it is pleasing to note that one novelist is ready to say of himself that the "costly but informative articles" which have added to the gaiety of a certain periodical "greatly reduce the number of people who will speak to him," and that his recreations are "smuggling, sabotaging bureaucracy, avoiding strenuous exercise," and that his favourite pastime is endorsing the back of a cheque. This does not mean that the enormous industry of the editor has not compiled a serious book—it contains some 5,500 notices, and the thoughtful preface indicates his principles of selection. It is interesting to read that the continuous stream of converts come less from the Oxford Movement type, or, if lay, from any form of Protestantism; and that dislike for Catholics is less due to political ideas than to the "recent and uncertain" change in moral standards. English Catholics, despite their disabilities, says the preface,

can claim that they are in an especial sense peculiarly representative of the nation. They have lived since the days of Elizabeth in a voluntary society, maintaining its own life independently of the State. It is a form of free association in which English history is particularly rich. . . . But the Catholic body is unique in that the doctrine which unites its members is not the special set of tenets of a sect, nor an inheritance bequeathed by some strong individual personage, but the old central faith of the English for a thousand years, although only for some of them, like those in this book, their unchanged religion still.

*Willingly to School*, by Dom Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward 18s).

WE KNOW WELL that anything Dom Hubert writes will be significant for lightness of touch and seriousness of motive. This holds good for the account of his boyhood at Downside. The book can be read as a personal record (if so, we are astounded at his memory) or as a sort of pageant of Catholic schooldays. If we read it as the former, we recognize not a few of those whom he so vividly portrays (there are even several Spy-like portraits), but since we have not met most of them, the book is of primary interest to those who remember the school as it was when he was a boy there. But it should interest, and even surprise, those who have no idea of what a Catholic boy's upbringing can be like. Dom Hubert recaptures the spirit of a Catholic boy in a Catholic school as perhaps no one else has ever done. He deliberately says little or nothing of the purely spiritual education he received there: the non-Catholic reader may be baffled by the naturalness of the Catholic boy at school, especially when he finds that a boy of such varied interests and alertness, and with so sensitive an imagination could gravitate, not uneasily, from athletics, theatricals, the Season and its balls, to monasticism. He would hate his book to be called an apologetic, but it is! One of his masters was a Harrovian. How unbridged might seem the Harrow of his day and the Downside of then, or now! We are glad that he ends by quoting that incomparable writer and man, Maurice Baring. If anyone wants a human document, let him re-read C.

*The Duke of Gallodoro*, by Aubrey Menen (Chatto and Windus 12s 6d).

THIS BOOK is often pure comedy, sometimes farcical, and at times tinged with an affectionate mockery of the antics of the Neapolitan (and therefore still very Greek) seaboard. We do not then care for the critics who put Mr. Menen into the company of the late Norman Douglas and the "young" Aldous Huxley. He does not sneer as the latter used too frequently to do. This book is always light-hearted and shoots its unpoisoned arrows alike at the natives and the more-than-eccentric English "Fourteenth Duke." We are rather surprised that Mr. Menen calls this the "first work of his maturity." There was just as much humour, and a deeper human sympathy, in *The Stumbling Stone*, and we do not think that even his Rabelaisianism gets much beyond the school-boy. But it does our insularity good to get a jolt, and to be made to see (as we think Mr. Menen is able to make us see) what very different sorts of persons there are in the world, and to be helped to laugh without condemning.

*Adventures in Two Worlds*, by A. J. Cronin (Gollancz 16s).

SINCE this is the "autobiography of a Doctor and Writer," we presume that the two worlds will be those of medicine and letters. But the Writer settles down to his work only in Part IV and the remaining pages are travel notes rather than literary adventures. Never mind; the travel notes are charming and unusual.

As a rule, we are rather nervous of doctors' reminiscences, if only because doctors mostly, and naturally, are not writers, and because we foresee a terrible lot of technical terms and maybe some forced jocularity. But Dr. Cronin is a writer: his story about Rose, his account of the operation for diphtheria (he is not a surgeon); of the cure of the "lunatic" Alex, and the whole character of Dr. Cameron—all that is true literature. The episodes in Wales (about which so much that is good has been written) and Notting Hill are tragic enough, but the author does not make capital out of the horrors he relates; he can smile at his failures and is not too gleeful over his successes (we enjoyed his invention of the fashionable woe Asthenia). His final profession of faith is a matter of conviction; and he truly sees that we are not "coerced" into believing. There are ways out of belief, but they turn out to be, in fact, evasions.

Dr. Cronin is now symptomatic of a great change which is rapidly taking place among an increasing minority, and affecting even the recalcitrant majority. Nearly all have left behind the vulgar crudity of a Dr. Conan Doyle, who asserted that his scalpel had never detected a soul (his nemesis was to relapse into an even cruder spiritism); and Dr. Cronin himself has advanced beyond his *Keys of the Kingdom*, in which a kind of equivalence seemed suggested between Christianity and the religions of the further East. But while it is true that "to him who does what is in him, God does not deny grace," we have to go further, and to be clear that, even at its best, Calvinism, for example, is both narrower and weaker than the Catholic's creed and sacraments. Anyhow, what we need, and what Dr. Cronin is helping to supply, is the realization that doctor and priest need one another. The three great vocations that do implement one another are the Doctor's, the Schoolteacher's and the Priest's; and this book, without being for a moment propagandist, but remaining purely objective, goes a long way towards proving this. In one way, it is deeply disturbing: in another, illuminative and very entertaining: and it points further than itself.

*I Saw No Sun*, by J. Delves-Broughton (Faber 1955).

A PREFATORY NOTE reminds us that the old Scots tongue is no mere dialect, and indeed some of the earlier conversations almost alarmed us out of persevering with this book; but persevere we did and, far from wearied, became more and more exhilarated, or, if overwhelmed, it was with pity and fear. The period during which no sun was seen (the words are from a heart-broken poem by Chideock Tichbourne, executed in 1586) was that which followed the Fifteen and the Union. An Englishman, Richard Wyndham, whose sympathies are with the Stuarts, arrives in the Edinburgh of 1736 with letters for Dallas of Balmahoy, gentleman turned super-smuggler, full of such vitality that you cannot wonder at his violence both of love and hate, his savagery, the adoration he inspired in his followers among whom are an appalling riff-raff. Yet even he does not dominate this story so full of barbarism, but Zilla, the basely deserted wife of Lord Heriot, whose lover Balmahoy is. Half insane owing to the alleged death of Heriot's child (the secret of this story must not be betrayed), she endured enough purgation to make her character and destiny understandable. That destiny was, in fact, one of redemption, and inner solitude. The story is not Catholic propaganda; yet, amid so much maniac anti-papistry, it is a Catholic priest, disguised and risking his life at every step, who shines as a figure of calm and charity, and gives to Zilla, thought to be dying, a heavenly comfort. The warp of the book, so to say, is violence; but the woof, not so. True, we think first, "How brief a time civilization has lasted!" Then, "Does it still last? Has it ever been more than a weak, thin, artificial affair?" Possibly that is all! But the strong and everlasting thing is the *spiritualized soul*, and in all Christian periods that is discoverable!

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#### ERRATUM

In the article CHURCH AND STATE in the June number, the last sentence of the first paragraph of page 362 should read as follows:—

But if that is so, if the House of Commons in 1927-8 represented "the overwhelming majority of Churchmen"—who, according to Archbishop Davidson, "had originally wanted no change"—better than did the House of Laity, why should it not do so again, etc.



ONE of the great occupational risks of business life under the pressure of to-day is that the practical man of affairs neglects his outside reading, and all too easily falls into a narrow circle of immediate preoccupations. There is always loss in this, and the Catholic business or professional man, as a member of the Church Universal, has a particularly strong reason for keeping his mind open to wider horizons. Certainly it was never more necessary than now to follow world happenings. A direct chain of causes and effects ties every business to economical changes in the world, which are themselves as often the consequence as the cause of changes in men's political and social ideas. These ideas in their turn come out of the religions, or irreligions, of contemporary man.

In many countries the Catholic Church is at the heart of the battle of ideas. Cardinal Manning's saying that "all great quarrels between men are at bottom theological" suggests that there is, in fact, no better starting-point or background for understanding the modern world than a Catholic one. Because of this approach and background,

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